

CONGRESS VOTES FOR \$1 BILLION IN AID FOR UKRAINE

Page 3



FACILITATOR FOR TALKS APPROVED IN VENEZUELA

Page 12



Aruba TODAY

On Top Of The News Email: news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel: +297 582-7800 Friday, March 28, 2014

When In Rome

Obama Meets With Pope Francis

Page 2

US President Barack Obama meets with Pope Francis, Thursday, March 27, 2014 at the Vatican. Obama called himself a "great admirer" of Pope Francis as he sat down at the Vatican Thursday with the pontiff he considers a kindred spirit on issues of economic inequality. Their historic first meeting comes as Obama's administration and the church remain deeply split on issues of abortion and contraception.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

Obama meets with Pope Francis

Michael D. Shear

Jim Yardley

© 2014 New York Times

VATICAN CITY - President Barack Obama met for the first time with Pope Francis on Thursday, sitting across from the pope at a desk in the papal library for a discussion that explored their philosophical common ground and their differences.

After the meeting, Obama described his discussion

ing immigration policies in the United States, but did not talk about provisions of the Affordable Care Act concerning insurance coverage for contraceptives, an issue that some Catholic bishops in the United States have raised.

In general, the conversation with the pope, as the president described it, was less confrontational than some observers had expected, with almost no

the U.S. Conference of Bishops to make sure we can strike the right balance" between religious concerns and the objectives of the health law.

The president said his meeting with Francis persuaded him that the pope could be helpful in advancing some of the president's economic goals, even if not directly.

"I don't think that His Holiness envisions entering into

ditional purple and gold striped uniforms, designed originally by Michelangelo. He greeted the pope enthusiastically, and as they walked into the library together, he was heard to say: "It is a great honor. I'm a great admirer. Thank you so much for receiving me." Obama met Francis' predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, on a prior visit to the Vatican.

After their private discus-

United States, in Baltimore." "If you have a chance to come to the White House, we can show you our garden as well," the president added.

Francis, an Argentine and the first pontiff from south of the Equator, gave the president two medallions, including one that symbolized the need for solidarity and peace between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

He also presented Obama with a copy of "Evangelii Gaudium," or "The Joy of the Gospel," the apostolic exhortation that Francis released in November as his call for a new era of evangelization and a renewed focus on the world's poor.

"I will treasure this," Obama said.

"I actually will probably read this in the Oval Office when I'm deeply frustrated. I'm sure it will give me strength and calm me down."

The pope responded in English. "I hope," he said, smiling.

At the conclusion of their meeting, Obama and Francis stood together, as others filed out of the room, according to a strict protocol.

"His Holiness is probably the only person who has to put up with more protocol than me," Obama said, prompting a smile from the pope after an interpreter translated the remark. They shook hands in an extended embrace as Obama took his leave.

The warm feelings that were apparent between the two men may reflect their similarities. Both seek to change the institutions they lead, and both are faced with powerful forces that aim to maintain the status quo.

In a three-paragraph communiqué released Thursday, the Vatican described the meetings Obama held with the pope and with top Vatican officials as "cordial" and touching on "current international themes," including a common commitment to fighting human trafficking. □



Pope Francis and President Barack Obama shake hands at the Vatican Thursday, March 27, 2014. President Barack Obama called himself a "great admirer" of Pope Francis as he sat down at the Vatican Thursday with the pontiff he considers a kindred spirit on issues of economic inequality. Their historic first meeting comes as Obama's administration and the church remain deeply split on issues of abortion and contraception.

(AP Photo/Gabriel Bouys, Pool)

with the pope as "wide-ranging" and focused mainly on two issues: how to help the poor and marginalized, and how to confront conflicts.

"There was a lot of time talking about the challenges of conflict and how elusive peace is around the world," Obama told reporters at a joint news conference with Matteo Renzi, the prime minister of Italy. Obama said he and the pope discussed the war in Syria and the persecution of Christians around the world.

The president said the pope raised the issue of overhaul-

time devoted to abortion, same-sex marriage or other social issues.

"We actually didn't talk a whole lot about social schisms," Obama said. "In fact, that really was not a topic of conversation. His Holiness and the Vatican have been clear on a range of issues. Some of them I differ with. Most of them I heartily agree with." Obama said the Affordable Care Act did come up in a separate talk he held with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the secretary of state at the Vatican, and that he had told the cardinal he would "continue a dialogue with

a partnership or a coalition with any politicians," Obama said. "I do think there is a potential convergence between what policymakers have to think about and what he's talking about." He said the pope was "creating an environment in which those of us who care about this are able to talk about it more effectively."

Obama entered the Vatican just before 10:30 a.m., making his way through the center of Clementine Hall, a large anteroom, and past a dozen members of the Swiss Guard, standing at attention in their tra-

sion, the two men exchanged gifts. White House officials said Obama presented the pope with a seed chest containing a variety of fruit and vegetable seeds used in the White House garden. Officials said the chest was made from reclaimed wood from the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore.

"These, I think, are carrots," Obama said, holding a pouch of seeds.

"Each one has a different seed in it. The box is made from timber from the first cathedral to open in the

AP: mudslide fatalities up substantially

BRIAN SKOLOFF
LISA BAUMANN
Associated Press

DARRINGTON, Washington (AP) — Weary rescuers in hip waders pressed through rain and their own exhaustion Thursday, searching for more bodies and a perhaps a miracle atop the pile of filth and debris from the mudslide that laid waste to a Washington town and killed at least 25 people.

The main goal now is to find more bodies and winnow the list of the 90 people who are still missing in the mudslide that buried the community of Oso on Saturday.

If dozens more bodies are found or left entombed in the debris, the Oso mudslide could become one of Washington state's largest disasters. The 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens killed 57 people, and a 1910 avalanche near Stevens Pass that struck two trains killed 96. At this point, narrowing that list means only one thing: digging. There are no more phone calls to relatives, no more door-to-door searches in hopes of locating people who just haven't checked in yet.

"At this time, we're not using any other type of methods other than the search and rescue," said Casey Broom of the Snohomish County emergency operations center.

The more than 200 people working on the sludgy heap cling to hope that at least one survivor is waiting for them in some pocket of the pile, which is a square mile wide and 40 feet deep in places.

"My heart is telling me I'm not giving up yet," Snohomish County District 21 Fire Chief Travis Hots said. "If we find just one more person alive, it's all worth it to me."

Authorities warned the community to expect a substantial rise in the death toll within the next two days as the medical examiner's office catches up with the recovery effort. □

Congress approves \$1 billion in aid for Ukraine

DAVID S. JOACHIM
JONATHAN WEISMAN
© 2014 New York Times

WASHINGTON - The House and Senate voted overwhelmingly Thursday to approve a billion-dollar aid package for Ukraine, two days after Senate Democrats relented to Republican demands that they drop a provision backed by the White House that would have authorized an overhaul of the International Monetary Fund.

The bills, which were nearly identical, passed by 399-19 in the House and by 98-2 in the Senate. President Barack Obama has said he will sign the legislation, which includes new sanctions against Russians and Ukrainians who provided support to Russia to annex the Crimea region of Ukraine.

"This bill is a first step toward supporting the Ukrainians and our Central and Eastern European partners, and imposing truly significant costs on Moscow," the House majority leader, Eric Cantor, said in a floor speech as his chamber considered its bill.

Sen. Robert Menendez of New Jersey, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said after the vote that a path had been cleared to get the bill to the president before the end of the week.

To match the two bills, the Senate will pass a House

bill to authorize the broadcast of Western news programs into Ukraine and the region, and the House will then take up the Senate bill and pass it.

In addition to providing aid money to Ukraine, the bills would formalize sanctions authorized recently by

apply.

The bill also makes mandatory the application of sanctions on any Russian official found to have engaged in corruption in Ukraine, a broader category than any applied by the administration. The Senate measure would give the

Ukraine up to \$18 billion in loans over two years.

In all, with additional funds provided by the United States and the European Union, Ukraine stands to receive up to \$27 billion to help it avoid default and to carry it through emergency presidential elections in



Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) speaks to reporters en route to the Senate floor to vote on the Ukraine aid bill on Capitol Hill in Washington, March 27, 2014. The Senate voted on Thursday to approve a billion-dollar aid package for Ukraine, which includes new sanctions against Russians and Ukrainians who provided support to Russia to annex the Crimea region of Ukraine.

(Gabriella Demczuk/The New York Times)

Obama and expand the list of individuals and entities targeted for sanctions. Unlike the president's executive order last week, the Senate's sanctions are mandatory and do not grant Obama latitude to choose which penalties to

administration more flexibility to apply economic sanctions to any Russian official engaged in corrupt activity and anyone who assists such activities.

Earlier Thursday, the IMF announced a preliminary agreement to provide

May.

The combined aid would replace a \$15 billion aid package that Russia had promised to Ukraine and then rescinded after its pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovich, was ousted in February. □

U.N. General Assembly vote isolates Russia

SOMINI SENGUPTA
© 2014 New York Times

UNITED NATIONS - In the first barometer of global condemnation of Russia's annexation of Crimea, Ukraine and its Western backers persuaded a large majority of countries in the U.N. General Assembly on Thursday to dismiss the annexation as illegal, even as Russia sought to rally world support for the idea of self-determination.

The resolution, proposed by Ukraine and backed by the United States and the European Union, represented the latest effort to isolate President Vladimir Putin of

Russia over the annexation, which followed a March 16 referendum in the peninsula that has been internationally regarded as Ukrainian territory.

The resolution garnered 100 votes in favor, 11 votes against, with 58 abstentions. The two-page text does not identify Russia by name, but describes the referendum as "having no validity" and calls on countries not to recognize the redrawing of Ukraine's borders.

Ukraine's acting foreign minister, Andriy Deshchytia, called Russia's actions "a direct violation of the

United Nations Charter."

Russia said Crimea should not have been part of Ukraine anyway, since it had been part of Russia for centuries until 1954 when the Soviet leader, Nikita S. Khrushchev, gave the peninsula to Ukraine, at the time a Soviet republic.

"Crimea was for many years an integral part of our country," the Russian ambassador to the United Nations, Vitaly I. Churkin, told the assembly, in an effort to appeal to other nations that harbor similar grievances over territory lost in the past. The Crimean vote to join Russia was an ex-

pression of its right to self-determination, said Churkin, appealing to another resonant principle of international law. "You have to be very misanthropic to criticize them for that," he said.

His argument met with a pointed rebuttal from the U.S. ambassador, Samantha Power.

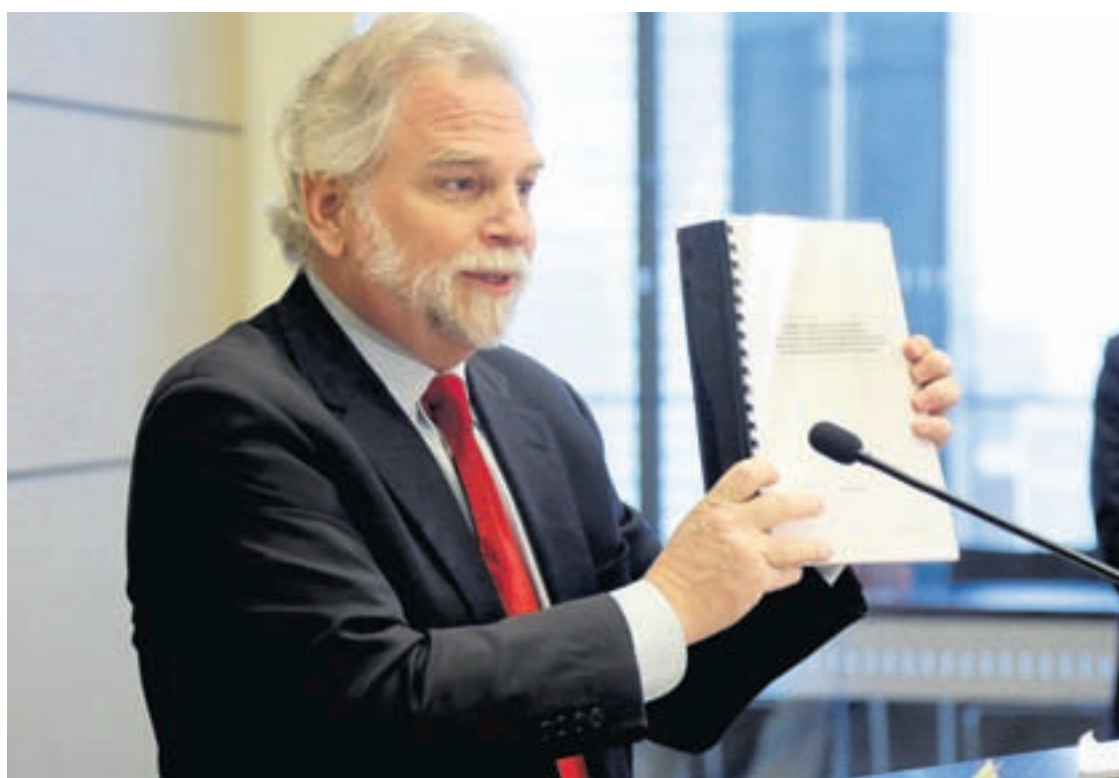
Coercion cannot be the means to self-determination, she argued. "The chaos that would ensue is not a world that any of us can afford," she said.

The most poignant argument came from Costa Rica. □



J.E. Irausquin Boulevard. 77, Palm Beach, Aruba. Tel: 586-3388.

Christie cleared in his own probe, but others loom



Attorney Randy Mastro holds up a copy of his report during a news conference Thursday, March 27, 2014, in New York. Mastro, with the law firm hired by New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, said Thursday that the governor was not involved in a plot to create gridlock near a major bridge as part of a political retribution scheme. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Lawyers hired by New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's administration said Thursday that the governor was not involved in a plot to create a traffic jam as political payback last fall, a conclusion that left the lead lawyer defending the integrity of the report, which came ahead of the results of separate federal and legislative investigations.

The closings became a major scandal for the governor — considered a top contender for the party's presidential nomination — in January when he had to backtrack and acknowledge the involvement of a top aide and an associate in orchestrating the closings. He has repeatedly denied knowing about the plot or being involved in the closings.

The taxpayer-funded report released by former federal prosecutor Randy Mastro relied on interviews with Christie and other officials in his administration — who were not under oath — and 250,000 documents, many of them emails and text messages. But the key figures in the political payback plot did not cooperate, leading Democrats to question the credibility

of the report and its thoroughness.

The investigation concluded Christie had no knowledge beforehand of lane closings Sept. 9-12 near the George Washington Bridge between New Jersey and New York that caused four days of massive gridlock in the community of Fort Lee. Christie told ABC News on Thursday the episode has been the most trying of his political career, but he never considered resigning over it and it will not affect any possible plans to run for president in 2016.

"I don't intend to make a decision on 2016 until a year from now, but it won't have anything to do with what's happened," he said. "What's happened in the past 10 weeks I think ultimately will make me a better leader, whether it's as governor of New Jersey or in any other job I might take in the public or private sector."

Democrats blasted the findings, with the party's national committee calling the report "nothing more than an expensive sham." New Jersey state Sen. Loretta Weinberg, co-chair of the legislative committee investigating the same issues, said it "raises more questions than answers." □

The Blue Lobster
International Cuisine & Lobster House

3 COURSE
Mon - Wed - Fri
\$38.99 P.P.
App - Main Dish & Dessert

SUNDAY
Dollars for Florins
40% OFF on main dishes 11-11 PM

SPECIAL OFFER

Lunch
Dollars for Florins
40% OFF on main dishes 11-4 PM

Palm Beach 164-A Noord, Aruba
lunch: 11:00 - 4:00pm. Dinner: 5:00 - 11:00pm
Tel.: (297) 586-3843. E-mail: info@arubabluelobster.com

US newlywed gets 30 years in husband murder case

MISSOULA, Montana (AP)

— A woman was sentenced Thursday to more than 30 years in prison for killing her husband of eight days by pushing him from a cliff in after they argued over her regrets about the marriage.

U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy said he saw no remorse from Jordan Graham, 22, in the killing of Cody Johnson, 25. He sentenced her to 30 years and

five months in prison and ordered her to pay \$16,910 in restitution.

Graham will be subject to five years of court supervision upon her release. There is no possibility of parole in the federal system, meaning she's likely to serve the full term.

A tearful Graham took the stand during Thursday's sentencing hearing, apologizing to her family and Johnson's. □

James R. Schlesinger, Cold War hard-liner, dies at 85

ROBERT D. McFADDEN
© 2014 New York Times

James R. Schlesinger, a tough Cold War strategist who served as secretary of defense under Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford and became the nation's first secretary

sunk to new lows. Congress was wielding an ax on a \$90 billion defense budget. And the Watergate scandal was enveloping the White House.

Schlesinger, a Republican with impressive national security and nuclear

Mayaguez episode, in which Cambodian forces seized an unarmed U.S. freighter, prompting rescue and retaliation operations that saved 39 freighter crewmen but cost the lives of 41 U.S. servicemen. In August 1974, with the

Schlesinger's blunt talk and uncompromising ways seemed insubordinate to Ford, and struck many White House officials and members of Congress as arrogant and patronizing. Besides his prickly relations with the president, Schlesinger differed with Kissinger over nuclear strategy, aid to Israel and other issues. In November 1975, after 28 months in office, he was dismissed.

While often criticized by political foes and in the media, Schlesinger was viewed by many historians as an able defense secretary who modernized weapons systems and maintained America's military stature against rising Soviet competition.

In his 1976 presidential campaign, Carter con-

sulted Schlesinger and was impressed. Taking the White House in 1977, Carter named him his energy adviser and, after the Energy Department was created in a merger of 50 agencies, appointed him its first secretary. The only Republican in the Carter cabinet, he was in charge of 20,000 employees and a \$10 billion budget.

Schlesinger, an outspoken advocate of nuclear power, shared with Carter a belief that fossil fuels were destined for exhaustion and warned that Arab oil supplies were unreliable. As oil prices rose and acute shortages and long lines at gasoline pumps formed, he and Carter endorsed conservation, tax incentives, synthetic fuels and other measures. □



FILE-- James Schlesinger, left, chairman of the commission looking into abuses at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, speaks to reporters during a news conference at the Pentagon, Aug. 24, 2004. Schlesinger, a tough Cold War strategist who served as secretary of defense under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford and became the nation's first secretary of energy under President Jimmy Carter, died in Baltimore on Thursday, March 27, 2014. He was 85.

(Carol T. Powers/The New York Times)

of energy under President Jimmy Carter, died in Baltimore on Thursday. He was 85.

Schlesinger died at the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center of complications of pneumonia, said his daughter Ann Schlesinger.

A brilliant, often abrasive Harvard-educated economist, Schlesinger went to Washington in 1969 as an obscure White House budget official. Over the next decade he became chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, CIA director, a cabinet officer for three presidents (two of whom fired him), a thorn to congressional leaders and one of the nation's most controversial public officials.

His tenure at the Pentagon was little more than two years, from 1973 to 1975, but it was a time of turmoil and transition. Soviet nuclear power was rising menacingly. The war in Vietnam was in its final throes, and U.S. military prestige and morale had

power credentials, took a hard line with Congress, and the Kremlin, demanding increased budgets for defense and insisting that America's security depended on nuclear and conventional arsenals at least as effective as the Soviet Union's.

With Europe as a potential flash point for war, he urged stronger NATO forces to counter Soviet allies in the Warsaw Pact. His nuclear strategy envisioned retaliatory strikes on Soviet military targets, but not population centers, to limit the chances of what he called "uncontrolled escalation" and mutual "assured destruction."

Beyond strategic theories, he dealt with a series of crises, including the 1973 Middle East war, when Arab nations attacked Israel, prompting a U.S. airlift of matériel to Israel; an invasion of Cyprus by Turkish forces, leading to a congressionally mandated arms embargo of Turkey, a NATO partner; and the

Watergate scandal boiling over, Schlesinger, as he confirmed years later, worried that Nixon might be unstable and instructed the military not to react to White House orders, particularly on nuclear arms, unless cleared by him or Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger. He also drew up plans to deploy troops in Washington in the event of any problems with a peaceful succession. As Nixon resigned, Ford took over and, for stability, retained the cabinet, including Schlesinger.

Ford and Schlesinger were soon at loggerheads. Ford favored "leniency" for 50,000 draft evaders after the Vietnam War. Schlesinger, like Nixon, had opposed amnesty. Unlike Schlesinger, Ford was willing to compromise on defense budgets, and he recoiled at Schlesinger's criticisms of congressional leaders. These were not grave policy disputes, but the two were personally incompatible.

Enjoy our
much celebrated
**3-Course
Dinner Special!**

Appetizer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish Soup • Onion Soup • Conch Fritters • Escargot • Salad
Entrée	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh Catch of the Day prepared by our local chef just the way you like it. • Jumbo Shrimp from our local waters, breaded served with potato or rice or with garlic tossed over linguine. • Filet Mignon* 8 oz. US Tenderloin • Grilled Boneless Chicken Breast
Dessert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chocolate or Banana Cake • Ice Cream • Coffee / Tea

**3-course dinner
\$25.95
per person**

This special cannot be used with any other promotions, vouchers or certificates.

Driftwood Restaurant
Authentic Aruban Seafood

25th ANNIVERSARY

Open daily from 5:00pm - 10:30pm (closed on Sundays)
For reservations call: 583-2515 - Klipstraat 12, Downtown.
www.driftwoodaruba.com • driftwood@setarnet.aw

Reverse mortgages, meant to help older people, hurt heirs

© 2014 New York Times

The only solace for Isabel Santos as she spends her evenings huddled over stacks of yellowed foreclosure notices is that her parents are not alive to watch their ranch-style house in Pleasant Hill, Calif., slipping away.

Santos, 61, along with a growing number of baby boomers, is confronting a bitter inheritance: The same loans that were supposed

out or die, have long posed pitfalls for older borrowers. Now, many like Santos are discovering that reverse mortgages can also come up with a harsh sting for their heirs.

Under federal rules, survivors are supposed to be offered the option to settle the loan for a percentage of the full amount. Instead, reverse mortgage companies are increasingly threatening to foreclose unless

try to get lenders to provide them with details about how to keep their family homes.

Santos' mother, Yolanda, began borrowing money against the equity in her home in 2009, when she was in her 80s. Santos thought the arrangement would defray her mother's living and medical expenses by providing cash upfront.

It was only after her mother

95 percent of the home's current value, or about \$237,000, according to one estimate. Any shortfall if the home sells for less than the debt is covered by a federal insurance fund, which all reverse mortgage borrowers are required to pay into each month.

After being contacted by The New York Times, the lender offered Santos the option to buy the home for 95 percent of the current

many heirs are facing foreclosure because of reverse mortgages. But interviews with elder care advocates, the housing counselors and heirs, suggest that it is a growing problem already affecting an estimated tens of thousands of people. And it is one that threatens to ensnare future generations, as older Americans increasingly turn to their homes for cash. Already, the combined debt of Americans ages 65 to 74 is rising faster than that of any other age group, according to the Federal Reserve. And approximately 13 percent of the reverse mortgages outstanding are underwater, according to an estimate from New View Advisors, a New York consulting firm.

"It's truly one of the thorniest issues I hear about from a growing number of attorneys," said Diane E. Thompson, a lawyer at the National Consumer Law Center. Reverse mortgage lenders say that they abide by federal rules, noting that their goal is to avert foreclosures, which can be costly and time-consuming. And used correctly, reverse mortgages can help older homeowners get cash to pay for retirement. Peter H. Bell, president and chief executive of the National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association, a trade group, notes that the loans are tightly regulated.

The reverse mortgage market has been in decline since the financial crisis. The number of such loans fell to 51,000 in 2012 from a peak of about 115,000 in 2007.

At the same time, the rate of default on reverse mortgages rose to approximately 9.4 percent of loans in 2012, up from 2 percent a decade earlier, according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. As the market foundered, large banks left, replaced by a fleet of smaller lenders and brokers.

For heirs, the problem with reverse mortgages often centers on the little-known set of federal regulations administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. □



Isabel Santos outside her late parents' home, which is under threat of foreclosure due to a reverse mortgage balance, in Pleasant Hill, California in March, 2014. Reverse mortgages have long been fraught with pitfalls for older borrowers, but they also create problems for their children, and some lenders appear to be ignoring federal rules about informing heirs of their options.

(Jim Wilson/The New York Times)

to help their elderly parents stay in their houses are now pushing their children out. "My dad had nothing when he came here from Cuba and worked so hard to buy this house," Santos said, her voice quivering.

Similar scenes are being played out throughout an aging America, where the children of elderly borrowers are learning that their parents' reverse mortgages are now threatening their own inheritances. Reverse mortgages, which allow homeowners 62 and older to borrow money against the value of their homes that need not be paid back until they move

heirs pay the mortgages in full, according to interviews with more than four dozen housing counselors, state regulators and 25 families whose elderly parents took out reverse mortgages.

Some lenders are moving to foreclose just weeks after the borrower dies, many families say. The complaints are echoed by borrowers across the country, according to a review of federal and state court lawsuits against reverse mortgage lenders.

Others say that they don't get that far. Soon after their parents die, the heirs say they are plunged into a bureaucratic maze as they

died two years later with an outstanding reverse mortgage balance of about \$308,000, that Santos learned that the loan had in fact jeopardized her parents' nest egg. The financial company that extended the loan, Reverse Mortgage Solutions, moved to foreclose unless she paid the full balance of the mortgage.

What Santos did not know at first was that surviving family members were supposed to be offered the choice to settle the reverse mortgage for a percentage of the full amount. In her case, that lesser amount offered to heirs is

value.

Lora Bitting, 61, said she was crippled by sadness after her father, Jesse, who took out a reverse mortgage on his Muskogee, Okla., home, died in December.

Still, Bitting contacted the lender a month later to begin the process of paying off the \$194,254.34 debt, according to a copy of the letter reviewed by The Times.

But because of delays in uploading her letter and a missing trust document, the lender ultimately sped up foreclosure proceedings on her father's home last month.

There is no data on how

BINGO!

MON., TUES., SAT. & SUN. • 4PM | FRI. • 5PM

TOTAL OF \$1,500 IN CASH PRIZES!

\$6 for 9 games includes the Powerball.
Buy a stamp for \$2 to double your prizes.Conditions apply. Management reserves all rights. Must be a member of the Trop Advantage® Club to participate. Must be 18 years of age or older. Play responsibly www.gamblersanonymous.org.

TROPICANA ENTERTAINMENT CASINOS | TROPICANACASINOS.COM

TROP
CLUB & CASINOJ.E. IRAUSQUIN BLVD. 248
Aruba, Dutch Caribbean
troparuba.com

US Financial Front:

Applications for US jobless aid dip to 4-month low

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of people seeking U.S. unemployment benefits fell 10,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 311,000, the lowest since late November and a hopeful sign hiring could pick up. The four-week average of applications, a less volatile measure, fell 9,500 to 317,750, the Labor Department said Thursday. That is the fourth straight drop and the lowest level in six months. The sustained decline suggests companies are confident enough about future growth to keep their staffs. Applications are a proxy for layoffs. Greater business confidence can also lead to more hiring. The four-week average is now near its lowest level since October 2007, just two months before the recession began. It dropped to 305,000 in September, but only because computer glitches in California and other states artificially lowered the figures. "The downward slide ... in the past month, following weather-related increases previously, signals a pick-up" in March hiring, Sal Guatieri, an economist at BMO Capital Markets, said in a note to clients.

About 3.3 million people received benefits in the week ending March 8, the latest data available. That was 43,000 fewer than the

previous week.

The steady drop in applications has made economists more optimistic about hiring in March. Several point out that applications have fallen to a level that is consistent with monthly job gains of more than 200,000. That would be a step up from February, when employers added 175,000 positions. And even February's gain was an improvement from the previous two months of paltry hiring. Cold winter weather in January and December shut down factories, kept consumers away from shops, and reduced home sales. Employers added 129,000 jobs in January and only 84,000 in December. □



Job seekers line up in the hundreds to attend a marijuana industry job fair hosted by Open Vape, a vaporizer company, in Downtown Denver. The Labor Department released weekly jobless claims on Thursday, March 27, 2014.

(AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

Contracts to buy US homes fell in February

JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of Americans who signed contracts to buy homes fell for the eighth straight month in February, a sign that real estate sales will likely slow over the next few months. The National Association of Realtors said Thursday that its seasonally adjusted pending home sales index dropped 0.8 percent to 93.9. The index has fallen 10.5 percent over the past 12 months. Pending sales are a ba-

rometer of future purchases: A one- to two-month lag usually exists between a signed contract and a completed sale. Higher mortgage rates, rising prices and a limited supply of homes have slowed sales since the index peaked in June. Snowstorms appear to have crimped purchases in the Northeast during February. Most economists expect sales to rebound as the weather improves and the spring buying season begins. But 2014 has started at a far weaker pace than last year. The higher

prices and loan rates appear to have made homes unaffordable for some would-be buyers. The Realtors said last week that sales declined 0.4 percent in February to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.6 million. It was the sixth decline in seven months. The trade group forecasts that sales will slip to 5 million this year from 5.1 million in 2013. An index that tracks mortgage applications fell last month to its lowest level since December 2000. The Mortgage Bankers Association said its seasonally ad-

justed index of refinancing and home-buying demand dropped 8.5 percent in the week that ended Feb. 21. The National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo builder sentiment index was 46 in February. Readings below 50 indicate that more builders view sales conditions as poor rather than good. And sales of new homes declined 3.3 percent last month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 440,000, the Commerce Department said Tuesday. □

Humane Society fetes actor James Cromwell at gala

SUE MANNING
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In 1954, the Humane Society of the United States was founded with borrowed money by a small group of people who wanted to protect animals, end slaughterhouse abuse and stop overbreeding. Turning 60 this year, the HSUS has millions of supporters, about 630 employees and a budget of \$170 million. It also has a long list of successes that has improved life for millions of animals. Examples include federal laws the organization lobbied for like the 1958 Humane Slaughter Act, 1970 Animal Welfare Act, 1973 Endangered Species Act, 1992 Dolphin Conservation Act, 2001 Chimp Act, 2007 Animal Fighting Prohibition Act and 2010 Truth in Fur Labeling Act. Other milestones included founding the Humane Society International in 1991 and rescuing 10,000 pets after Hurri-

cane Katrina. The society is holding three parties to mark its six decades. The first in Beverly Hills on Saturday recognizes the agency's Hollywood and celebrity activists who support animal causes with picket line and pocket book. Galas will also be held in New York City and the society's hometown of Washington, D.C. Proceeds from the \$350-a-plate gourmet vegan dinner at the Beverly Hilton go to the group's companion animal and farm animal protection campaigns. Actor James Cromwell will receive a lifetime achievement award. "He's been a friend to the HSUS and to animals for decades. He is somebody who has used his fame and platform for farm animal protection, animals used and abused in labs, horses who are used for horse racing, you name it, if an animal is in trouble, he is there," said Michelle Cho of the HSUS. Cromwell changed his

thinking about animals on a 1975 coast-to-coast motorcycle trip. "I went through feed lots in Texas for what seemed like an entire day, with animals on either side of the road as far as you could see, waiting to be slaughtered. The stench, the sound and the horror of it. I said, 'I can't do this anymore.' I began the journey of becoming a vegetarian, learning that I can live without cheese, I can live without corned beef hash. This was a personal odyssey," Cromwell said. He overdid the dietary change at first, and his health suffered, but he kept working at it, learned more about how animals are turned into meat, and eventually became a vegan, he said. "The Humane Society of the United States has become more politicized and more courageous in the last 10 years," Cromwell said. "I support them and am honored to be receiving this."



James Cromwell arrives at The Beverly Hills Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. Cromwell will receive a lifetime achievement award from the Humane Society of the United States on Saturday, March 29, 2014, in Beverly Hills, Calif. "He's been a friend to the HSUS and to animals for decades. He is somebody who has used his fame and platform for farm animal protection, animals used and abused in labs, horses who are used for horse racing, you name it, if an animal is in trouble, he is there," said Michelle Cho of the HSUS.

(Photo by Annie I. Bang/AP)



A REFRESHING ADDITION TO YOUR ENTERTAINMENT OPTIONS AT:

THURSDAY:



S & Bert, or Wilmer Osuna and Puro Salsa

SATURDAYS:



The captivating sound of Junior King and Bachata Mia

FRIDAYS:



Sounds of the Caribbean with Steel Band

Locates at:




ARUBA

For more information call us ta 586-7777

During Saturday's gala, California Gov. Jerry Brown will get the Humane Governor Award for bills he's approved, including one that ended the use of lead shot. Lead bullets left behind were being consumed by wildlife, putting more than 200 species in jeopardy, said HSUS spokesman Alan Heymann. Gabriela Cowperthwaite will receive the HSUS Impact Award for "Blackfish," the documentary about orcas at SeaWorld. The theme park company disputes the film's claim that keeping orcas in captivity is harmful to the animals or their trainers, but Cho said the film represents "the first time anyone has shed a global spotlight on captive orcas." Actor Paul Wesley of "The Vampire Diaries" will receive the Humane Generation Award. Some of the battles the HSUS is waging today be-

gan six decades ago, Heymann said. Staging animal fights is now illegal in every state but breaking the law isn't always a felony and prosecutions are often a low priority. Wayne Pacelle has been president and CEO of HSUS for 10 years and Heymann said that under his tenure, "more laws have been passed in more states more quickly in the last 10 years than any other decade in the society's history." Some critics say the HSUS spends too much money on lobbyists and staff. Heymann says federal law determines how much the HSUS spends on lobbying, and that its "finances are an open book." Future goals for the HSUS include: —Keeping U.S. horse slaughterhouses closed while fighting the shipping of American horses overseas. □



Our famous open grill

Tango Restaurant is open 7 days a week from 4 pm till 11 pm
Indoor & outdoor seating - Large Terrace with live music

EARLY BIRD 3-Course Menu
Served between 4 pm and 7 pm
Not valid in combination with other offers

Special \$22.95

Located at Arawak Garden, For reservations call (297) 586 8600 - www.tangoaruba.com

Malaysia jet search: fresh clues but bad weather

ROB GRIFFITH
SCOTT McDONALD
Associated Press

PERTH, Australia (AP) — The clues keep piling up: more and more mysterious objects spotted bobbing in the southern Indian Ocean, perhaps part of the missing Malaysian airliner, perhaps not. But just as the night sky depicts the universe as it once was, the satellite images that reveal these items are also a glance backward in time. Strong winds and fast currents make it difficult to pinpoint where they are right now, and stormy weather Thursday again halted the hunt by air and sea for evidence of debris fields. The search for the plane that disappeared March 8 has yet to produce a single piece of debris — not to mention the black boxes, which could solve the mystery of why the jet flew so far off-course. For relatives of the 239 people aboard Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, it was yet another agoniz-



Ahmad Nizar Zolfakar, director of Air Traffic Management Sector of Malaysian Department of Civil Aviation, speaks to the relatives of Chinese passengers on board Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, while the projection shows a graphic of the search and rescue operation on the flight's possible crash area during a briefing meeting at a hotel in Beijing China Friday, March 27, 2014. Planes and ships searching for debris suspected of being from the missing Malaysian jetliner failed to find any Thursday before bad weather cut their hunt short, as Thailand said one of its satellites had spotted hundreds of objects in the area.

ing day of waiting. "Until something is picked up and analyzed to make sure it's from MH370, we can't believe it," Steve Wang,

whose 57-year-old mother was aboard the flight, said in Beijing. "Without that, it's useless." Japan said it provided Malaysia with

information from satellite images taken Wednesday showing about 10 objects that might be debris from the plane, with the largest

measuring about 4 meters by 8 meters (13 feet by 26 feet). The objects were located about 2,500 kilometers (1,560 miles) south-west of Perth, Japan's Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office said. That would place them in the same general area as the 122 objects spotted by a French satellite on Sunday. Muddying the picture perhaps, a Thai satellite revealed about 300 objects about 200 kilometers (125 miles) to the south-west of the items seen by the Japanese and French satellites. The photos were taken Monday, one day after the French and two days before the Japanese. The objects spotted by the Thaichote satellite ranged from 2 meters to 16 meters long, said Anond Snidvongs, director of Thailand's space technology development agency. He said the images took two days to process and were relayed to Malaysian authorities Wednesday. □

Qatar: US couple gets 3 years in prison

ABDULLAH REBHY
Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — An American couple charged with starving their 8-year-old adopted daughter to death in the Gulf Arab county of Qatar was sentenced Thursday to three years in prison, a verdict that stunned and shocked the family, according to the couple's defense lawyer. Matthew and Grace Huang were jailed in Qatar on murder charges in January 2013, following the death of their daughter, Gloria. They were released from prison last November, but banned from leaving Qatar during the trial. The case raised questions about possible cultural mis-

understandings in a conservative Muslim country where Western-style adoptions and cross-cultural families are relatively rare. On Wednesday, the State Department expressed concern that not all of the evidence had been weighed by the court. It also said it had raised the case with Qatari officials on multiple occasions. The prosecution demanded the death penalty, alleging that the couple had denied food to Gloria and said she was locked in her room at night. The girl was pronounced dead when the Huangs took her to the hospital in January 2013. The Huangs say their adopted daughter, who was born in Ghana, died of

medical problems complicated by unusual eating habits that included periods of bingeing and self-starvation. Defense witnesses have testified that the girl appeared healthy and active just days before her death. A Qatari doctor who conducted Gloria's autopsy found that the child's hips, ribs and spine protruded and concluded the cause of death was dehydration and wasting disease. During Thursday's sentencing in Doha, Judge Abdullah El-Emedy also ordered the Huangs deported from Qatar after serving the three-year sentence and issued them a fine of 15,000 Qatari riyals, which is about \$4,100. □



International School of Aruba

invites you and your family to join us
at our Open House

Saturday March 29th, 2014
From 10:00AM - 3:00PM
Admission: Free

• Sports Tournaments • School Tours • Book Fair

• BBQ • Bingo • Educational Demonstrations

• And More

Address: Wayaca 238A Tel: 5835040 www.isaruba.com







Turkey moves to block YouTube but attempt fails

DESMOND BUTLER

Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish authorities pressed Thursday to block access to YouTube following similar action against Twitter, a move sure to provoke further outrage in a country where social media is widely used. Turkey's technology minister, Fikri Isik, said the national telecommunications authority was imposing the block "as a precaution" after an audio recording of a government security meeting was leaked on the video-sharing website. Despite the government's actions, YouTube was still widely accessible following the announcement. Key allies, including the U.S. and the European Union, had criticized Turkey's earlier move against Twitter as a restriction of free speech and a step backward for Turkish democracy. That ban came shortly after Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to "rip out the roots" of Twitter, which has been a conduit for links to recordings suggesting government corruption. Turkey holds cru-

cial local elections Sunday that are widely regarded as a referendum on Erdogan's rule.

The ban against YouTube comes after an alleged audio recording of a meeting between the Turkey's foreign minister, intelligence chief and top military and Foreign Ministry officials was leaked on YouTube. The four are allegedly heard discussing a military intervention in neighboring Syria, a sensitive political issue in Turkey, although the context of the conversation is not clear.

A Foreign Ministry statement said the meeting was held to discuss threats of a possible attack on a mausoleum in Syria — of the grandfather of the Ottoman Empire's founder — which is considered Turkish territory and protected by Turkish troops.

A government official said access to YouTube was closed down out of "national security concerns and because of the urgency of the situation." The official said the move aimed to prevent the "posting of other recordings that may

threaten national security." The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of government rules

leak an act of espionage and an "open declaration of war against the Turkish republic." In a statement,

espionage over the YouTube leak and the country's media watchdog imposed a news blackout on



A poster of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is seen in an election billboard of his Justice and Development Party with a mosque in the background in Istanbul, Turkey, Thursday, March 27, 2014. Erdogan has been ensnared in a corruption scandal that has toppled four Cabinet ministers. He has provoked outrage at home and abroad with an attempt to block Twitter and YouTube. His incessant us-against-them rhetoric and conspiracy theories have alienated allies. Meanwhile, the Turkish Lira has fallen, interest rates are up and the Turkish economy has fallen off a cliff. It all might be enough to oust any leader. But as Turks prepare to vote in local elections Sunday, it's all about Erdogan. The billboard reads: "We build the 3th bridge over the Bosphorus." (AP Photo/Emrah Gurel)

that bar civil servants from speaking to journalists without authorization.

Erdogan railed against the audio leak. "This is immoral, this is sleaze, this is shameful, this is dishonorable," he said during a campaign rally. Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu called the

his office called eavesdropping on a top-secret meeting an attack on Turkey's security and said those responsible would be severely punished. The state-run Anadolu Agency reported that a chief prosecutor had launched an investigation into possible

the details of the recording. Google Inc. owns YouTube and Google spokeswoman Abbi Tatton said some users in Turkey weren't able to access YouTube.

"There is no technical issue on our side and we're looking into the situation," she said. □



WACKY WAHOO'S

PALM BEACH #33-A WWW.WACKYWAHOOS.COM

STEAK, SEAFOOD, B.B.Q. & FUN!

Ex-Hadicurari BBQ & Grill with the same owner's.
We do our own daily fishing so we serve the freshest seafood on the Island.

Very reasonable price, exciting menu and NO SERVICE CHARGE

Dinner from 5:30 - 10:00
Monday - Saturday



FRESH CATCH & SEAFOOD
We are located close to the High-rise hotel's at walking distance.

RESERVATION SUGGESTED

TEL: 586-7333



Iraq:

Bombings kill 26 people in Baghdad

SAMEER N. YACOB

Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — A series of bombings targeting commercial areas of Baghdad killed 26 people as residents were heading out on the town Thursday evening in a new spasm of violence to strike the Iraqi capital, according to Iraqi officials. The attacks happened within minutes of each other, suggesting a coordinated assault like those favored by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, an al-Qaida-inspired group that is behind much of the bloodshed in Iraq. The evening's first attack was also the deadliest. A car bomb exploded af-

ter sunset in a commercial street in the Sunni-dominated northern neighborhood of Azamiyah, killing 12 people and wounding 28. Thursday night is a popular time for Iraqis to go out, as the local weekend begins the following day. Minutes later, another bomb exploded near a market in the same neighborhood, killing seven and wounding 27. Those blasts were followed by an explosion in a shopping street in the capital's Aamiriyah district, killing three people and wounding 15 others. Yet another blast struck a commercial street in southwestern Baghdad, killing four peo-

ple and wounding 14. Medics confirmed the casualties for all attacks. All officials spoke anonymously because they were not authorized to talk to the media. No group immediately claimed responsibility, but the attacks bore the hallmarks of ISIL. The extremist group frequently uses car bombs and suicide attacks to target public areas in their bid to undermine confidence in the government. The blasts struck little more than a month before Iraqis vote in national elections scheduled for April 30, the country's first parliamentary elections since U.S. troops left in late 2011. □



Early Bird Dinner
Come & see the spectacular Sunset & receive a 10% discount on your dinner, between 5:30 & 7 pm, by presenting this Ad.
Our menu offer an impressive selection of Fresh Seafood (caught daily by our own fleet), International Dishes and a relaxing Atmosphere.

DAILY HAPPY HOUR
at our Captain's Morgan Bar from 4 - 6 pm \$4 Bar.
Open from 11 am - 10 pm
For Reservations call: 5862259
Located between Holiday Inn Hotel & Playa Linda Resort www.pelican-aruba.com

THE PELICAN NEST
Bar & Seafood Grill



Philippines and Muslim rebels sign landmark peace deal

OLIVER TEVES

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) —

The Philippine government signed a peace accord with the country's largest Muslim rebel group on Thursday, the culmination of years of negotiations

nila. Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, whose country brokered the peace talks, attended the ceremony.

"In signing this agreement, the two sides have looked not to the problems of the past, but to the promise of

the future," Najib said. "After so many years of conflict, and so many lives lost, it is a momentous act of courage."

About 1,000 people attended the signing ceremonies, including guerrilla commanders wearing

business suits instead of military uniforms who were stepping into the palace for the first time.

"For generations, fellow Filipinos in the (southern Mindanao) region were embroiled in a cycle of poverty, injustice, and violence," Aquino said. "If we are to truly address the root causes of conflict, we must close the gap between the region and the rest of Filipino society."

Some in the crowd wiped away tears as presidential peace adviser Teresita Deles said in a speech, her own voice breaking: "No more war! ... Enough!"

The peace accord concludes formal negotiations that began in 2001. A cease-fire agreement had been in place since 1997 and has been largely observed by both sides.

More than 120,000 people have died in separatist violence since the 1970s in Mindanao, the main southern Philippine island. It is home to most of the country's 5 million Muslims, but Christians remain the overall majority.

Previous presidents, includ-

ing Corazon Aquino, Aquino's mother, tried but failed to resolve the conflict, which has stunted growth in the region and helped foster Islamic extremism in the country and elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

Other insurgent groups in the south have vowed to keep fighting for full independence. The region is also home to the Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim extremist network with international links that the Philippine army is battling with American support.

"I will not let peace be snatched from my people again," Aquino said. "Not now, when we have already undertaken the most difficult and most significant steps to achieve it. Those who want to test the resolve of the state will be met with a firm response based on righteousness and justice." Under the accord, called the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front agreed to end violence and a demand for separate state in exchange for broader autonomy. □



President Benigno S. Aquino III, third from right, applauds with Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) Chairman, Al Haj Murad Ebrahim, second from left, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, center, and Secretary Teresita Quintos-Deles, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, right, after the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) by MILF chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal, left, Datu Tengku Gnafar, third from left, and Miriam Coronel Ferrer, second from right, of the Philippine government in a ceremony at the Malacanang Presidential Palace in Manila, Philippines Thursday March 27, 2014.

(AP Photo/Malacanang Photo Bureau, Ryan Lim)

and a significant political achievement for President Benigno Aquino III.

The deal grants largely Muslim areas of the southern Mindanao region greater political autonomy in exchange for an end to armed rebellion. But it will not stop all violence in a part of the country long plagued by lawlessness, poverty and Islamist insurgency. Implementing the ambitious accord also will be challenging.

Aquino and leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front witnessed the signing of the agreement in the presidential palace in Ma-

Pistorius on the line now in murder trial

C. TORCHIA

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) —

Before he killed his girlfriend, Oscar Pistorius broke barriers and the world embraced him for it. The double-amputee runner challenged the athletic establishment and secured the right to race on his carbon fiber blades in the 2012 Olympics.

A Paralympic champion, he won races by infinitesimal margins, describing the pressure of competition as "nail-biting" and "nerve-

wracking."

It's all on the line now for Pistorius, who dug deep as an athlete and reveled in global accolades that flowed in spite of, and because of, the obstacles posed by his disability. The man, who racing commentators said was slow from the starting block, is expected to testify soon at his murder trial. The defense begins its case on Friday after four weeks of prosecution-led testimony.

Pistorius said this week that it was a tough time and

there is "a lot ahead of us," mindful perhaps that the impression he makes on Judge Thokozile Masipa, who will deliver a verdict, could mean as much for his fate as disputed testimony from experts, neighbors and acquaintances. He faces 25 years to life in prison if convicted of premeditated murder for killing lover Reeva Steenkamp. Besides acquittal, some legal analysts point to another option — conviction on a lesser murder or homicide charge that could still

jail him for years.

Pistorius shot Steenkamp, a 29-year-old model, through the closed door of a toilet cubicle in his home in the night,

later saying he mistook her for an intruder; prosecutors allege he killed her after an argument. Their portrait of Pistorius as a gun enthusiast with a hair-trigger temper clashes with his glowing image before the Feb. 14, 2013 shooting.

So far, he has been a spectator in his trial, alone in the dock. □



Pelican Adventures



Celebrating our 28th anniversary with YOU!

SPECIAL OF THE WEEK: Sunset & Dinner Cruise

Includes snacks, open Bar, caribbean music, after 2 hours of Sunset Cruise you will enjoy a 3 course Dinner at our Pelican Nest Restaurant on the Sea, spectacular view, professional service, Freshly made dishes to spoil your senses.



Visit us at Casa del Mar, Playa Linda, Holiday Inn Concierge/lobby desk/ beach huts or at our own Pelican Pier, located between the Holiday Inn & Playa Linda Resort.

For reservations call 587-2302 (Mon-Sun) Or book online at: www.pelican-aruba.com

PRESENT THIS AD AND RECEIVE \$10 DISCOUNT PER COUPLE

Venezuelan president accepts facilitator for talks

HANNAH DREIER
LUIS ALONSO LUGO
Associated Press
CARACAS, Venezuela
(AP) — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has agreed to enter talks with his country's opposition

with the help of an outside facilitator. A group of South American foreign ministers made the announcement Thursday after two days of meetings with government officials, student protesters and human rights groups

aimed at bringing about dialogue after weeks of deadly unrest. The diplomats didn't say whether what it called a "good faith witness" to talks would come from Venezuela or another country,

casting doubt on whether the formula for talks would satisfy President Nicolas Maduro's opponents, many of whom resent the international community's failure to criticize the government's recent actions in putting down protests.

Earlier in the day, the president of Colombia said foreign ministers from three countries, which he did not name, were working out the terms. Maduro's socialist administration announced on Thursday morning that it had accepted another of the delegation's suggestions: the creation of a human rights commission that will report directly to the president and look into allegations of abuse by security forces. Maduro's year-old government has been widely criticized for its harsh crackdown on opponents protesting galloping inflation, rampant crime and shortages of basic goods like toilet paper and corn flour. Weeks of clashes between protesters and loyalists

have left at least 32 people dead. In their statement Thursday, the delegates called upon all parties to renounce violence.

Hours before the announcements, the U.S. State Department issued its strongest response yet to the ongoing crisis, saying it would consider imposing sanctions against Venezuela if Maduro doesn't reconcile with opponents. South American diplomats have been at odds with the U.S. over how to handle the country's volatility. The State Department's top official for Latin America said sanctions could become an "important tool" to pressure Maduro. "If there is no movement, no possibility of dialogue, if there's no democratic space for the opposition, obviously we have to think about this, and we are thinking about this," Assistant Secretary of State Roberta S. Jacobson told reporters in Washington. She added that the U.S. would work with its partners in the region to impose any such measures as efficiently as possible.

Earlier this month, Secretary of State John Kerry said the U.S. was considering all options to address human rights concerns in Venezuela, including sanctions being pushed by U.S. lawmakers for weeks. He didn't provide details about what would trigger such a response, and said he was reluctant to damage an already weak economy.

On Thursday, a spokesman for the International Monetary Fund warned Venezuela that it must restore balance to its economy, and offered technical assistance to tame runaway inflation that hit 57 percent in February.



Students make posters outside of United Nations office in Caracas, Venezuela. The large banner on the building reads in Spanish "UN come to Venezuela now". The large group of protesting anti-government students have camped in front of the office of the United Nations asking it to come and observe the situation, as Venezuela's bloody political standoff heads into its third month.
(AP Photo/Fernando Llano)

Argentine government begins painful cuts

MICHAEL WARREN
Associated Press
BUENOS AIRES, Argentina
(AP) — Argentina's cash-strapped government is cutting utility subsidies and trying to borrow for the first time in years as teachers, public health workers and other former allies take to the streets demanding pay raises to match some of the world's highest inflation. The government has subsidized 80 percent of the cost of water, natural gas and other basic services for a decade as the economy recovered from a devastating collapse and debt default. Since taking office in 2007, President Cristina

Fernandez added many more subsidies, seeking to stimulate the economy by transferring wealth to the poor.

"Millions of people have seen their salaries increase," Fernandez said in a national address Thursday night. "They've been able to buy a car, or air conditioning."

She insisted her model of "social inclusion" won't change, but called on Argentines to adapt to a "more rational use of energy."

Her economy minister, Axel Kicillof, said the reductions in utility subsidies would be carefully targeted to avoid hurting the poor,

slowing economic growth or provoking even higher inflation. Factories and the poor will be exempt as will people living in Argentina's frigid south or arid north.

The cuts will be borne instead by businesses and middle-class consumers, who must reduce consumption by 20 percent to avoid paying higher bills. "We're calling it a reassigning of subsidies," Kicillof said. That means a disproportionate load on the same kinds of people striking for pay raises to keep up with soaring consumer prices. A teachers' strike that has kept 3.5 million children out of school reached its 16th day Thurs-

day. Teachers whose base pay is just \$400 a month rejected the government's offer of 30 percent raises now and new pay talks in September. They're holding out for a 35 percent increase — which is roughly what some economists say is the annual inflation rate. Many consumers will see their water and gas bills double, said Ramiro Castineira, an analyst with the Econometrica consulting firm in Buenos Aires. He said energy subsidies alone cost the government \$17 billion last year and other economic subsidies cost \$8 billion, without counting welfare programs.



Aruba Doet.... Turtugaruba Is Still "On"

ORANJESTAD - Aruba has known a big volunteer event last Friday and Saturday: Aruba Doet. Turtugaruba went to DRUIF beach with 69 participants and cleaned that beach, a turtle nesting habitat. Officially Aruba Doet is over, but Turtugaruba is still "on". Last Monday and Tuesday two other beaches have been prepared for the sea turtle nesting season with the help of 20 Marines under guidance of Sergeant Arjan von der Weide. The beach of Dos Playa Grandi was rather clean, no plastics, but a lot of driftwood and trunks. This wooden material was taken away from the sea side and relocated on the inside of the beach to prevent quad racers and 4WD's from driving on this nesting beach. By removing the driftwood and trunks from the sea side there is no obstruction anymore for the sea turtles to find a good nesting site. The same procedure was followed on Bachelor's Beach, a heavy polluted beach next to the Red An-



chor. The beach now is ...beautiful and clean. Please

do not drive on the white sand, driving compacts the sand and will damage

the eggs. More info: www.facebook.com/Turtugaruba

Turtle Hotline (+297) 592-9393 (to report turtle activity: 24/7). □



Immortalize life's most memorable moments in crystal: Memorabilia Exhibition at Caribbean Queen Tonight at 7pm!



PALM BEACH - Christiane Dupuis had a dream of becoming an entrepreneur in Aruba! She fell in love with the island many years ago and wanted to create a product that reflects the beauty of Aruba, a product of universal appeal that could be marketed here to locals and visitors. She found what she was looking for in crystals and has been working to make

her dream come true ever since. Christine now shares her love for Aruba by immortalizing life's most memorable moments in a very special way, in the highest quality glass available. Today, Christina's company offers elegant crystals, which are carefully engraved with a cherished photograph in 2D or 3D to personalize a souvenir or a gift which only takes a few

minutes to create, thanks to an amazing precise laser engraving capabilities. Operating on the island, the company offers a wide selection of customized crystals gifts in all price ranges for different occasions such as: graduation, wedding, memorial, birth, anniversary or to capture a special moment and bring it to life. To introduce her crystals



**Beauty
On The
Beach**

**Jennifer
Boling**

She is from
Columbus
Ohio, it is her first
time in Aruba, she
is on vacation with
some friends.

**The Blue
Lobster**
INTERNATIONAL CUISINE & LOBSTER HOUSE
Phone: 586-3843

WINNER OF TRIPADVISOR'S CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE 2012
**Best Lobster House and International
Cuisine's Restaurant**

to wider and more diverse audiences a memorabilia exhibition at Caribbean Queen on Friday, March 28th, from 7pm, to 10pm, at the Palm Beach Plaza Mall, will afford visitors and tourist a firsthand experience. Christina reports that her goal is to deliver a superior product, laid out by experienced graphic designers, who work meticulously with photographs, images and text, to create the most elegant product possible. Working with great dedication and trust, Christine company makes a commitment to excel at production, delivery and customer service. To engrave a 2D or 3D photographs, she explains, her designers begin to load a standard image through the company's website, camera or scanner. Then the designers begin to process the image with the software and customize it with the client's spe-

cific requirements. The software controls the laser and imprints high frequency pulses of light into the crystal. That's how the image appears. Precise control throughout the process allows the creation of 3D sculptures inside the glass without scratching it. When a client finally receives the elegant 3D best quality optical crystal, the product maintains its durability for a lifetime. You may chose a flat postcard crystal, small or large crystal cubes, small or large heart-shaped or trophy iceberg-shaped crystals, with or without a glowing light at the base, necklaces, and key chains. Meet Christiane Dupuis, President, Nalev Enterprises V.B.A., Aruba, and her associates at Caribbean Queen, Palm Beach Plaza Mall, or go to the web site for more information. www.crystal3dmemorable.com

Early-Birders Love Tango Restaurant at Arawak Garden!

PALM BEACH - These guests are the Chiasson couple from Toronto, Canada. Originally Glenda is from Venezuela, she has this amazing charm and with husband Brandon they are living life to its fullest. They have visited Aruba before but had never been to Tango Restaurant. They had read our excellent reviews on Trip advisor and decided to have dinner with us. Juan was their waiter and due to the nice mix grill for two, consisting of filet/lobster/chorizo and chicken and the excellent service they received, they came for the second time to enjoy our early bird. After sipping their glasses of Malbec and enjoying their last night on the island under the beautiful Aruban moon, the smiles you see on this pictures, are the proof of the ultimate dining experience at the best steakhouse on the strip, Tango Restaurant. □



FREE SHIRT FRIDAY!

Get a Free Alhambra T-Shirt when you earn 500 Points today with your Alhambra Advantage Card!

Where Aruba goes to play!

Open daily 10am to 4am • J.E. Irausquin Blvd #47 • 583.5000 • www.casinoalhambra.com

Must be an Alhambra Advantage member. All programs and promotions are subject to change or cancellation without prior notice.



MLB Preview: Changing a ball to a strike

AP Sports Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was a crucial pitch in a game in the early 1990s. A fastball. Away.

When the ball hit Randy Knorr's mitt, the Toronto Blue Jays catcher moved it back over the strike zone. The umpire called it a ball. "Fifty-thousand fans in the stands are booing," Knorr said. "I knew it was a ball. I was just trying to bring it back over. And he smacked me in the back of the head and said: 'Don't ever do that to me again. You know that was a ball, and now you made everybody in the stadium think it was a strike. Don't do it again.'"

It happens in every Major League Baseball game, where the catcher tries to move his mitt subtly to massage balls into strikes. Sometimes it works; sometimes it doesn't. Technically, it's an attempt to cheat, an ingrained and artful baseball deception.

How much does it influence the game? More than you probably thought. In a sabermetric age where everything is measurable, teams can calculate how many runs a catcher can save by mastering the art of pitch framing. Webpag-



In this Feb. 17, 2014, file photo, Washington Nationals catcher Jose Lobaton catches the ball during a spring training baseball workout, in Viera, Fla.

es galore are devoted to the topic, with stat-geeks analyzing the location of every single pitch and tabulating which catchers are best and winning balls and losing strikes.

Teams are keeping count as well. Knorr is now the bench coach for the Washington Nationals, who have devoted more resources to analytics in recent years under general manager Mike Rizzo. This spring training, Rizzo made a trade with the Tampa Bay Rays to acquire Jose Lobaton, in part because Lobaton rated well in pitch-framing. And where did Lobaton learn the skill? From the guru himself, Jose Molina, a two-time World Series winner set to play his 15th MLB season.

"Those pitches away that you think are a ball, he can make those a strike," Lobaton said. "I try to be like him, but I can't."

A half-dozen extra strikes in a game can make a difference. Tampa Bay manager Joe Madden once said his catcher Molina was worth 50 runs per season based solely on pitch framing.

Continued on Page 20

Associated Press

Phil Mickelson shoots 77 in Texas Open



Phil Mickelson tips his cap to the gallery following a chip shot on the 10th hole during the first round of the Valero Texas Open golf tournament, Thursday, March 27, 2014, in San Antonio.

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Phil Mickelson shot a 5-over 77 on Thursday in the Texas Open to fall nine strokes back during the suspended first round. Pat Perez and Danny Lee shot 4-under 68s at TPC San Antonio to share the clubhouse lead and Andrew Loupe was 4 under with seven holes to play when darkness forced the suspension of play. The start was delayed 2 hours, 40 minutes because of fog,

and 45 players were unable to finish the round. The 77 was Lefty's highest score since a 78 in August in the PGA Championship. In his previous two starts, Mickelson missed the cut in the Honda Classic and tied for 16th three weeks ago at Doral in the World Golf Championships-Cadillac Championship. □

Pat Perez watches his tee shot on the 10th hole during the first round of the Valero Texas Open golf tournament, Thursday, March 27, 2014, in San Antonio.

Associated Press



Williams beats Sharapova for 15th straight time

STEVEN WINE

AP Sports Writer

KEY BISCAIYNE, Florida (AP)

— Serena Williams beat Maria Sharapova for the 15th consecutive time, rallying in both sets for a 6-4, 6-3 victory in the Sony Open semifinals on Thursday.

Williams, seeking a record seventh Key Biscayne title, improved to 16-2 against Sharapova and hasn't lost to her favorite foil since 2004.

No. 7-seeded Tomas Berdych advanced to Friday's semifinals, beating Alexandr Dolgoplov of Ukraine 6-4, 7-6 (3). Berdych was the Key Biscayne runner-up in 2010.

The No. 1-ranked Williams won with a superior serve and better returns. She hit nine aces and broke five

times, helping her rebound from deficits of 4-1 in the first set and 2-0 in the second.

"I wasn't playing my best," Williams said. "I knew if I wanted to stay in the tournament and make another final, I just had to play better."

Williams earned her 14th consecutive victory against a top-10 player. Her opponent in Saturday's final will be either Australian Open champion Li Na or Dominika Cibulkova of Slovakia.

Williams first won Key Biscayne in 2002 and is the defending champion. She has worn Miami Dolphins orange and turquoise throughout the tournament and considers it her home event because she lives 90 minutes up the road.

"When I grew up I always

wanted to play here," she said. "I guess I just don't want to let go. It's my favorite stop on the tour. It's home. All my friends come. So it's perfect for me."

There was no evidence of a home-court advantage at the start, when Williams failed to convert four early break-point chances and fell behind. Sharapova cracked a succession of winners from the baseline and earned applause from Williams after besting her in one exchange.

But Williams broke back when Sharapova committed three consecutive backhand errors, and gained momentum from there, sweeping the final five games of the first set.

The story was similar in the second set, and after fall-



Serena Williams reacts after defeating Maria Sharapova, of Russia, 6-4, 6-3 at the Sony Open tennis tournament in Key Biscayne, Fla., Thursday, March 27, 2014.

Associated Press

NHL Capsules

Lundqvist, Rangers top Flyers 3-1

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Henrik Lundqvist stopped 30 shots and came within 1:53 of his second shutout in three games as the New York Rangers stretched their season-best winning streak to five games with a 3-1 victory over the Philadelphia Flyers on Wednesday.

The second-place Rangers moved three points ahead of third-place Philadelphia in the Metropolitan Division race by winning what could be a playoff preview. New York has eight games remaining, and the Flyers have 10 left.

Derek Dorsett scored in the first period, defenseman Ryan McDonagh added a goal in the second, and Dominic Moore made it 3-0 in the third against Steve Mason, who made 26 saves.

The Flyers' Jakub Voracek scored his 21st goal off a faceoff with 1:53 to go to make it 3-1.

CANUCKS 5, WILD 2

ST. PAUL, Minnesota (AP) — David Booth

scored two unassisted goals and Eddie Lack made 29 saves to lead Vancouver.

Zack Kassian, Daniel Sedin and Ryan Kesler also scored for Vancouver as the Canucks try to make a late push to overtake Phoenix and Dallas for the Western Conference's final wild-card playoff spot.

Minnesota outshot Vancouver 31-19 and got goals from Charlie Coyle and Nino Niederreiter, but lost its third straight at home. Booth scored for the second consecutive game after going scoreless in his previous 32.

DUCKS 3, FLAMES 2

CALGARY, Alberta (AP) — Andrew Cogliano scored the go-ahead goal at 14:41 of the third period as the Ana-



New York Rangers' Henrik Lundqvist, right, blocks a shot by Philadelphia Flyers' Jakub Voracek during the second period of an NHL hockey game, Saturday, March 1, 2014, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

heim Ducks picked up an important two points.

Stephane Robidas' shot from the blue-line was kicked out by Karri Ramo but the puck went right to Cogliano at the face-off circle, who quickly fired in his 21st goal of the season.

Nick Bonino and Mathieu Perreault also scored for Anaheim, which kicked off a three-game road trip to Western Canada with its sixth road win in its last eight games away from the Honda Center.

The Ducks moved to within two points of the Pacific-leading San Jose Sharks. Anaheim still holds two games in hand.

Brian McGrattan and Jiri Hudler scored for Calgary. □

ing behind, Williams resorted to her dominating power. She quickly won one game with two aces and two service winners during a period when she swept 11 consecutive points.

Sharapova committed groundstroke errors on the final three points, and a victorious Williams trotted to the net, her left fist leading the way. She has more victories against Sharapova than against any other opponent.

"Despite my results against her, I still look forward to playing against her because you learn so much from that type of level which she produces," Sharapova said. "You finish the match, and you know where you need to improve and the things that you need to work on." □



Pacers use rally late to beat Heat 84-83

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Paul George scored 23 points and Roy Hibbert had 21, leading the Indiana Pacers back from a seven-point fourth-quarter deficit for an 84-83 victory over the Miami Heat on Wednesday night.

NBA Capsules

The NBA's best home team ended a two-game losing streak, took a 2-1 lead in the season series against the two-time defending champions and rebuilt a three-game advantage in the race for the Eastern Conference's top seed. Indiana (52-20) also clinched its second straight Central Division crown, something it hadn't done since 1998-99 and 1999-2000.

LeBron James scored 38 points, but missed a potential go-ahead 3 late. Chris Bosh had a jumper at the buzzer to win it but it hit nothing but air.

George had two monster dunks — one over LeBron James — to get the Pacers back in the game.

SPURS 108, NUGGETS 103

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Tim Duncan had 29 points, 13 rebounds and five assists, and San Antonio overcame a fourth-quarter collapse to beat Denver for its 15th straight victory.

Danny Green scored 16 points before leaving with a foot injury early in the second half. Tiago Splitter, Tony Parker and Manu Ginobili had 10 points apiece for San Antonio (55-16),



Indiana Pacers forward Paul George, center, shoots between Miami Heat defenders Udonis Haslem, left, and LeBron James during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Indianapolis, Wednesday, March 26, 2014. The Pacers won 84-83.

Associated Press

which maintained the league's best record. Aaron Brooks scored 25 points and Kenneth Faried had 24 points, including 15 points in a frenzied final quarter for Denver. Timofey

Mozgov added 14 points and 11 rebounds and Quincy Miller had 11 points. After leading by as many as 24 points and by 20 midway through the third quarter, San Antonio needed

Duncan's late heroics to preserve its win streak. Denver went on a 34-20 run in the final 11 minutes.

KNICKS 107, KINGS 99

SACRAMENTO, California (AP) — Carmelo Anthony scored 36 points, and J.R. Smith added 29 points as New York held off a furious rally to beat Sacramento and move a game closer to a playoff berth.

A night after a lackluster 127-96 loss at the Los Angeles Lakers, the Knicks avoided a monumental collapse to another one of the Western Conference's worst teams. New York led by 24 in the third quarter before Sacramento surged back, and the Knicks needed a scintillating shooting performance from Anthony and Smith to snap a two-game skid. New York (30-42) is two games behind Atlanta for the final playoff spot in the weak Eastern Conference after the Hawks (31-39) lost 107-83 to Minnesota.

DeMarcus Cousins had 32 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists for the Kings.

RAPTORS 99, CELTICS 90

BOSTON (AP) — Terrence Ross scored 24 points, Kyle Lowry 23 as Toronto beat Boston to edge closer to its first playoff berth since 2008. Terrence Ross scored 24 points and Kyle Lowry 23 as the Toronto Raptors edged closer to their first playoff berth since 2008 with a 99-90 win over the Boston Celtics on Wednesday.

DeMar DeRozan added 20 points for Toronto, which increased its Atlantic Division lead to 2½ games over Brooklyn, which lost in Charlotte. The Raptors can clinch a playoff spot if the New York Knicks lose at Sacramento later Wednesday. Jared Sullinger led Boston with 26 points, going 4 of 6 from 3-point range. Boston lost for the seventh time in eight games.

It was Lowry's eighth straight game of 20 or more points and helped the Raptors snap an 11-game losing streak in Boston.

Toronto captured its 19th road win, one off the club record set 2000-01.

TIMBERWOLVES 107, HAWKS 83

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Goran Dieng had 15 points and 15 rebounds as Minnesota dealt slumping Atlanta another costly loss.

Corey Brewer and Kevin Martin each scored 18 points and Kevin Love had 14 points and 12 rebounds for the Timberwolves. Minnesota scored 32 points off 26 Hawks turnovers and blew the game open in the second half.

Paul Millsap had 12 points and 10 rebounds for Atlanta, which has lost four straight and has the New York Knicks right in their rearview mirror for the eighth and final playoff spot. Jeff Teague, who had averaged more than 23 points over the previous four games. □

MLB Preview

Continued from Page 18

Other estimates vary, but mathematical consensus shows Molina's subtlety with the glove translates into three to five extra wins each year. That's enough to win or lose a pennant.

"Any pitch that can change a count that way, whether it's going to be a 2-1 or a 1-2, that's the biggest swing you can possibly have right there," Nationals reliever Drew Storen said. "It keeps you in good counts. It definitely helps you out, if you can get five

or six calls that would've gone the other way just from the catcher framing it." Molina's peers at the top of pitch-framing ratings include his brother, Yadier Molina of the St. Louis Cardinals, and Jonathan Lucroy of the Milwaukee Brewers. All have something in common: Soft movements using the wrist and elbow while the rest of the body stays still.

"It's strange," Brewers closer Jim Henderson said. "You would think if you miss



In this Aug. 25, 2013, file photo, New York Yankees' Alex Rodriguez, right, reacts to a called strike as Tampa Bay Rays catcher Jose Molina throws the ball back to the mound during the 10th inning of a baseball game in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Associated Press

your spot as a pitcher with that small target you might not get the call, but somehow he makes it work within the parameters of the plate there. So it's actually amazing how well he does if we screw up."

Lucroy said it took years to hone the skill.

"You can see a big, big difference between guys who can catch and guys who can't," Lucroy said. "The easiest thing for young players to work on is just keeping your head and body still and just moving your hand. That's all it is; catch the ball and stop it." □

MOTORSPORTS

Hamlin cleared after metal removed from eye

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) -- A small piece of metal in his eye, and not a sinus infection, caused Denny Hamlin to miss last week's race at California.

Hamlin was not medically cleared to race last Sunday by doctors in the infield care center at Auto Club Speedway.

He had visited the care center on Saturday and Sunday complaining of an irritation to his eye, and it was determined at the track that it was related to a recent sinus infection Hamlin had suffered.

Hamlin was referred to a local hospital for further evaluation, and once there, "a small piece of metal was found to be in Hamlin's eye," Joe Gibbs Racing said in a statement Wednesday.

The metal was removed and JGR said "Hamlin felt immediate improvement." By then, the race at Fontana had already started and replacement driver Sam Hornish Jr. was behind the wheel of Hamlin's No. 11 Toyota.

Hamlin underwent further testing in California before he was cleared to fly home to North Carolina. He was evaluated in Charlotte on Monday and again on Wednesday, when it was determined he had no lingering issues with his vision and is cleared to race this weekend at Martinsville Speedway.

Hamlin has four career victories at Martinsville and an average finish of eighth.

The timeline of Hamlin's diagnosis and revelation it was a piece of metal in his eye and not a sinus infection comes a day after Dale Earnhardt Jr. called on NASCAR to release information regarding Hamlin not being cleared to race at California.

Earnhardt, during an appearance Tuesday at Charlotte Motor Speedway, questioned why there had been no official NASCAR statement or further explanation from Hamlin on what happened. He was particularly interested because it is so unusual for a driver to be parked shortly before a race is about to begin.

"I'm worried the perception is bad for NASCAR and the perception is bad for Denny," Earnhardt said. "If Denny didn't race because his vision is blurred and he had a sinus infection, NASCAR should put out a release and say, 'This is the timeline of the events and this is why we made this choice and this is the protocol for going forward.'"

"That answers everybody's questions. Don't you have questions? I have questions. We shouldn't have questions. We should all feel pretty comfortable with what happened."

Earnhardt missed two races in 2012 after he suffered his second concussion in six weeks. He drove for weeks following the first concussion, which occurred while testing at Kansas Speedway. He was cleared to drive following that crash, and the concussion was discovered after he wrecked again at Talladega.

"If Denny did everything right, that's good to know," he said. "Why NASCAR did the things they did and the timeline, it would be good to know those things be-



NASCAR driver Denny Hamlin, center, watches the second half of an NBA basketball game between the Charlotte Bobcats and the Brooklyn Nets in Charlotte, N.C., Wednesday, March 26, 2014.

Associated Press

cause the drivers are all curious and the fans are curious. Information is moving around. It just doesn't need to be going on. We

should all know what happened and know why it happened and be done with it and not have to worry about it." □

Malaysian GP chiefs wait and see on new contract



Ferrari driver Fernando Alonso, center, of Spain signs autographs for his fans as he arrives at the paddock for a practice session ahead of the Malaysian Formula One Grand Prix at Sepang International Circuit in Sepang, Malaysia, Friday, March 28, 2014. (AP Photo/Peter Lim)

SEPANG, Malaysia (AP) — The head of the Malaysian Grand Prix says fan reaction to Formula One's new era, with quieter engines and energy-efficient racing, will play a role in deciding whether the race

will stay on the calendar. Sepang International Circuit chief executive Razlan Razali says talks to extend the contract beyond next year's expiry will begin this weekend. He told the local New Straits Times newspa-



per that F1's new rules and quiet engines "affect the atmosphere of the race so we'll want to see more of

how this issue develops." Razali said ticket sales for this weekend's race were down as expected, with

the nation in a somber mood following the loss of Malaysian Airlines flight MH370. □

U.S. college sports system a rarity across the globe

The Associated Press

The U.S. college sports system, which generates billions of dollars and draws millions of fans and viewers every year, is a rarity across the globe.

Other nations are puzzled about the concept of student amateurism, and how college students can compete in front of full stadiums and have their jerseys sold, but don't receive a salary. Even in England, where rowing and rugby college events can draw thousands of fans, the competition is more of a friendly match, not an engine for revenue like March Madness or a major college football rivalry.

From their posts across the world, AP reporters described how top athletes are developed in different sports.

ARGENTINA

Players are often signed as children by scouts from local soccer clubs. There is no age limit, although players have to be 18 for Argentine clubs to sell them to foreign teams without parental consent. Parents generally consent to the sale of younger players. Although the player gets a salary, the club gets the transfer fee.

AUSTRALIA

In Australian rules football and rugby, talented players are scouted in their early teens and join academies and feeder teams run by the big clubs. There are no significant national university-level competitions. Top players get scholar-



In this Saturday, Oct 6, 2012, file photo, the Northwestern football team heads to the locker room after warming up before an NCAA college football game against Penn State in State College, Pa.
Associated Press

ships for elite private high schools, or "centers of excellence" at state government-run schools. Many players take low-paid rookie contracts immediately after high school and use those as the route to the big leagues.

CHINA

The world's most populous nation has an organized state sports system that was criticized by some around the Beijing Olympics in 2008. Children are selected as young as 4 and encouraged to focus on the sport for which they show the most aptitude. They are sent to schools that are sometimes far from their homes. Some of the most successful Chinese athletes have recently broken with the state-

controlled system, choosing their own coaches and taking charge of their careers, including tennis star Li Na and young golfer Feng Shanshan.

ENGLAND

England hasn't won a major title in soccer since the 1966 World Cup and the way talent is developed in the country is often criticized. The best young English players are scouted at an early age by local clubs with trials. The very best often join Premier League clubs' academies before the age of 10. But at big clubs' academies such as Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal, English youngsters are competing with foreign talent and very few local players successfully make the transi-

tion from youth squad to the club's first team. In 2012, the Football Association opened a national football center designed to emulate its French rivals Clairefontaine. The focus at the football center is to educate coaches capable of nurturing technically gifted players from the age of 5.

INDIA

Young cricket players compete in city and provincial competitions. Schools and universities play a small role in player development. Around the world, the best cricket players represent their countries in youth competitions. The Indian Premier League and the growing popularity of Twenty20 cricket — the shortest form of the game

at senior level — is giving more players at a lower level the chance to be professionals, with more clubs, shorter seasons and a chance for players not on the national team to be recognized. The Indian Premier League holds annual player auctions.

JAPAN

Pro baseball teams can't negotiate with young players until they've finished high school at the age of 18. There is an amateur draft every fall. Heavily scouted teenage players often turn pro straight out of high school, a route that set Yu Darvish and Daisuke Matsuzaka en route to the majors. Other talented players join corporate leagues or go to college to develop their games before signing with professional teams.

MEXICO

Mexico's top flight soccer teams are allowed to sign youth players to professional contracts regardless of age. The only restriction is that the length of the contract cannot be for more than three years. Most professional squads have their own soccer schools, where kids from 5 to 12 participate.

SPAIN

In Spain, young soccer players can sign professional contracts when they turn 16, the minimum work age stipulated by Spanish law. Before that, children join training academies run by soccer clubs that field youth teams in amateur leagues. □

Van Garderen wins 4th stage of Volta a Catalunya

SETCASES, Spain (AP) — American cyclist Tejay Van Garderen pulled away on the final uphill climb in snow and heavy fog to win the fourth stage of the Volta a Catalunya on Thursday, while Joaquim Rodriguez maintained the lead. Van Garderen of BMC emerged from the cloud enveloping the Vallter 2000 special category summit and edged Romain Bardet around the

final turn to claim the 166-kilometer (103-mile) ride through the Pyrenees in nearly five hours.

Alberto Contador crossed three seconds later in third, followed by Rodriguez and fellow challenger Nairo Quintana. Tour de France winner Christopher Froome finished seventh at eight seconds behind Van Garderen.

Rodriguez remained in first place in the general classification, followed by

Contador at four seconds behind. Van Garderen moved into third place at seven seconds off the pace. Bardet, Quintana, and Froome were all within 17 seconds of Rodriguez.

It was Van Garderen's first individual stage victory on the World Tour.

"I let the other guys do a couple of little attacks first so they could kind of wear each other out," Van Garderen said. "I got a little

lucky and the cold might have helped me a little bit. I can cope with it a bit better than some of those guys who are 60 kilos."

Van Garderen downplayed his chances of upsetting the strong group of favorites for the title.

"It's going to be difficult because there aren't that many opportunities," he said. "There is no time trial, there are no more mountain stages. But if we see an opportunity, we are

definitely going to take it." Spanish Vuelta winner Christopher Horner withdrew from the race before the start of the day's stage. The veteran American also pulled out of this month's Tirreno-Adriatico before the finish.

Friday's fifth stage is a 218-kilometer (134-mile) hilly ride from Llanars Vall de Camprodon to Valls. The seven-day race finishes on Sunday in Barcelona. □

TOURIST GO FLEA MARKET**L.G. SMITH Blvd. LOOK FOR THE ORANGE FLAGS & TENTS****ARUBA ARTS-CRAFTS-SOUVENIRS-WATCHES - SUNGLASSES-SILVER-JADE-JEWELRY -
DRESSES-BAGS-BRACELETS-CUBAN CIGARS - T-SHIRTS-SHORTS - WALLETS - DELFT BLUE****TELL & BRING YOUR FRIENDS**

TRANSPORTATION EASY CONSTANT PUBLIC BUSES - TAXI'S - TOUR BUSES OR WITH YOUR OWN CAR.

SOMETHING TO SELL? WE HAVE TENT & TABLE FOR YOU **Call: 7345454 / 569-2089****BBQ****AVAILABLE:****OPEN****SATURDAY &
SUNDAY**

from 8am - 6pm.

**Stay a few hours.
TAKE EXTRA CASH**

Microsoft's Office apps for iPad ushers in new era

MICHAEL LIEDTKE**AP Technology Writer****SAN FRANCISCO (AP)** —

Microsoft has released an iPad version of its popular Office software suite, a breakthrough heralding a new era under a CEO who promises to focus more on the devices that people are using instead of trying to protect the company's lucrative Windows franchise.

Thursday's unveiling of the much-anticipated iPad apps for Microsoft's bundle of word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software comes nearly four years after Apple Inc. released the tablet computer that has contributed to a steady decline in sales of desktop and laptop machines running on the Windows operating system.

Microsoft's decision to relent to persistent demands to make its top-selling software application available on the world's most popular tablet comes seven weeks after the Redmond, Washington, company anointed Satya Nadella as its CEO after being led for 13 years by Steve Ballmer. The change in command gives Microsoft Corp. an opportunity to prove it's a more nimble company adapting to evolution of computing instead of clinging to its old ways. Nadella, who has been working at Microsoft for 22 years, emphasized that he felt rejuvenated since taking over as CEO.

"You see things from a fresh set of eyes and fresh perspective," Nadella told a crowd of reporters gathered in San Francisco for his first major public appearance as CEO.

The Office app for the iPad represents a major step in the right direction for

Microsoft, said FBR Capital Markets analyst Daniel Ives. "They finally looked in the mirror and realized they needed to go with the crowd in terms of iPads," Ives said.

Like several other analysts, Ives thinks the Office app for the iPad could generate an additional \$1 billion in revenue for Microsoft. Although the Office app is free to anyone who wants to read Office's Word, Excel and PowerPoint programs on the iPad, it will require a subscription to Microsoft's Office 365 to create and edit documents on the device.

The Office 365 subscriptions cost \$70 or \$100 annually, with the lower price placing more restrictions on the number and types of devices that can be used.

The Office 365 subscriptions also have been required to use Office apps built for the iPhone and Android phones last summer, so many iPad owners many already have one.

But millions of other people with iPads probably haven't had a reason to buy an Office 365 until Thursday. Nearly 200 million iPads had been sold through the end of 2013, meaning about 5 percent of those device owners would have to pay for a \$100 annual subscription to generate an additional \$1 billion in revenue.

Microsoft hasn't said how many Office 365 subscribers it already has, but Nomura analysts Rick Sherrlund estimates the number at anywhere at between 14 million to 24 million. He estimates that the annual subscription revenue is running at about \$2.5 billion.

Office has long been one of Microsoft's gold mines. In the company's last fiscal



Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella gestures while speaking during a press briefing on the intersection of cloud and mobile computing Thursday, March 27, 2014, in San Francisco.

Associated Press

year ending June 30, the business division that is anchored by Office posted an operating profit of \$16.2 billion on revenue of \$24.7 billion.

The availability of an Office app also could encourage more people to buy an iPad. That, in turn, could siphon more sales away from laptops running on Windows, which also generates billions in licensing fees for Microsoft each year.

This year, Gartner Inc. expects 271 million tablets to be sold this year, including those running on Windows and Android, versus a total of 277 million desktop and laptop computer. By the end of 2015, tablets should be outselling PCs by a wide margin, Gartner said.

Microsoft hasn't made Office apps for Android tablets yet, though the company has previously said those will be coming. Last year, Office apps for Android phones came out a month after the iPhone versions debuted.

"We are taking great focus and great care that Office on every device shines through," Nadella said.

That marks a change in sentiment for Microsoft. Even as it became clear iPad was reshaping computing, Ballmer steadfastly resisted making an Office app for the device. He had been hoping that most of the 1 billion worldwide Office users would decide to buy Windows tablets instead of the iPad, but there was little evidence that was happening in sig-

nificant numbers. Sales of Microsoft's own Windows tablet, Surface, turned out to be a huge letdown.

The Office app for the iPad has so many features designed for the device that Microsoft clearly was working on its design while Ballmer was still CEO, said Forrester Research analyst Rob Koplowitz.

But it didn't hit the market until Nadella took over and that could signal "a sea change,"

Koplowitz said. "I am hoping we are seeing something different in terms of how Microsoft operates as a company."

Nadella promised to show off more pieces of his "innovation agenda" for Windows next week at a software developers conference in San Francisco. □

Tech firms, Citigroup tank Wall Street

KEN SWEET

AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — It was a bad day to be an investor in Citigroup or tech stocks. U.S. stock indexes edged lower for a second day Thursday as investors continued to retreat from technology stocks. The technology-heavy Nasdaq composite index closed at its lowest level in six weeks. Bank stocks were also in focus. Citigroup fell 5 percent after the Federal Reserve denied the bank's plan to raise its dividend and buy back more stock. Most other major banks won approval to raise their divi-

Netflix lost 2.2 percent and Google fell 1.6 percent.

The sell-off continues what has already been a tough month for technology stocks. Netflix is down 18 percent this month, and Twitter and Tesla have fallen 16 and 15 percent, respectively.

Investors say it's reassuring to see some of the air come out of these speculative technology stocks. Netflix is still trading at 90 times its expected 2014 earnings; the average for companies in the S&P 500 index is 17. Tesla is worth 119 times its expected earnings and Twitter, which hasn't even

serve denied the bank's plan to raise its dividend and buy back more stock. The bank was one of only five to have plans rejected by the Fed. Citi was the only large U.S.-based commercial bank to face a rebuke from the Fed.

Investors had been bidding up the big banks' stock prices in the weeks heading into the announcement, in anticipation that the Fed would allow the banks, five years after the financial crisis, to return more money to investors. The nation's biggest banks have proposed \$22.79 billion in dividends this year,

American economists suggest 2014 could be a breakout year

MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Once this year's harsh weather has faded, the U.S. economy could be poised for a breakout year — its strongest annual growth in nearly a decade.

The combination of an improving job market, pent-up consumer demand, less drag from U.S. government policies and a brighter global outlook is boosting optimism for the rest of 2014.

Many analysts foresee the economy growing 3 percent for the year, after a weak first quarter that followed a stronger end of 2013. It would be the most robust expansion for any year since 2005, two years before the Great Recession began.

One reason for the optimism: The government estimated Thursday that the economy grew at a 2.6 percent annual rate in the October-December quarter, up from its previous estimate of 2.4 percent. Fueling the gain was the fastest consumer spending for any quarter in the past three years.

The numbers pointed to momentum entering 2014 from consumers, whose spending drives about 70 percent of the economy.

Analysts cautioned that the brutal winter weather has depressed spending in the January-March. And they think economic growth has likely slowed to an annual rate of 2 percent or less this quarter. Yet that slowdown could pave the way for a solid bounce-back in the April-June quarter. Many think growth will be fast enough the rest of the year for the economy to grow at least 3 percent for all of 2014.

"We think that once temperatures return to more normal levels, we will see a lot of pent-up demand released," said Gus Faucher, senior economist at PNC Financial Services. "People will be buying cars and homes and making other purchases that they put off during the winter."

Economists have suggested before that the recovery appeared on the verge of acceleration, only to have their expectations derailed by subpar growth that left unemployment at painfully high levels.

This time, there's a growing feeling that the improvements can endure.

"We are looking for progressively faster growth as the year goes on," said Doug Handler, chief U.S. economist at IHS Global Insight.

The National Association for Business Economics predicts that the economy will grow 3.1 percent this year, far higher than the lackluster 1.9 percent gain in 2013.

If that forecast proves accurate, it would make 2014 the strongest year since the economy, as measured by the gross domestic product, expanded 3.4 percent in 2005. Since the Great Recession ended in June 2009, annual growth over the past four years has averaged a weak 2.2 percent.

The U.S. economy has been hit by a series of blows since then — from a Japanese tsunami and European debt crisis, which hurt U.S. exports, to Washington budget fights, which fueled uncertainty about the government's spending and tax policies.

Tax increases and deep spending cuts that took effect in 2013 subtracted an estimated 1.5 percentage points from growth last year.

With Congress having reached a budget agreement and a deal to raise the government's borrowing limit, companies now have more certainty about federal fiscal policies. □



Trader Mathias Roberts works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. U.S. stock indexes edged lower for a second day Thursday as investors continued to retreat from technology stocks. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

dends.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 3.52 points, or 0.2 percent, to 1,849.04 and the Nasdaq dropped 22.35 points, or 0.5 percent, to 4,151.23.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell a modest 4.76 points, or less than 0.1 percent, to end at 16,264.23. The blue-chip index benefited from a gain in Exxon Mobil, which rose \$1.54, or 1.6 percent, to \$96.24 as the price of oil increased 1 percent to just over \$101 a barrel.

Once again, the high-flying technology stocks that soared in 2013 were among the hardest hit. Tesla Motors fell nearly 3 percent,

made a profit, is trading at more than 3,000 times what analysts expect the company to earn this year.

Most investors believe that while Netflix, Tesla and Facebook have bright futures, the stocks may have gotten ahead of themselves in recent months.

"The real story in the market is this valuation correction and risk-off trade," said Steve Massocca, a fund manager for the Wedbush Hedged Dividend Fund. "The more speculative areas have seen money come out of them in a hurry."

Citigroup was the second-biggest decliner in the S&P 500 after the Federal Re-

a 23 percent increase from a year ago, according to data provided by Thomson Reuters.

"While there's going to be some winners and losers, these 'stress test' results will be an overall positive for the banks because it removes some of uncertainty in the sector," said Andres Garcia-Amaya, a global market strategist for J.P. Morgan Funds.

"From a long-term perspective, they're all in a great place competitively," Massocca said.

As they have often done in recent weeks, investors looked past the latest positive reports on the U.S. economy. □

Ally files for IPO that could raise more than \$3B

JOSHUA FREED
AP Business Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The U.S. government is getting ready to sell more than half of its remaining stock in Ally Financial in a public offering that might raise enough money to pay back the rest of its taxpayer bailout. The sale could raise as much as \$3.06 billion. That plus the \$15.3 billion the government has already recouped would make taxpayers whole for the \$17.2 billion bailout that began in

2008.

However, whether or not that happens will be determined by investor appetite for owning part of a company that is still shoring up its finances.

Ally was known as GMAC Inc. at the time of its bailout during the financial crisis. The company had been the auto lending arm for General Motors. But it was nearly wrecked by bad subprime mortgages made by its Residential Capital unit.

Last May, Ally cut ties to ResCap when the subsidiary filed for bankruptcy protection. Its assets were auctioned for \$3 billion in October.

Ally has also been selling off auto finance operations in Canada, Mexico, and overseas. The sales and ResCap move have transformed Ally into a company mostly focused on U.S. auto lending and banking. Ally doesn't have a network of bank branches. To get money to lend out,

it offers certificates of deposit and also takes portions of deposits that are pooled by other financial institutions. Its \$8.2 billion in so-called brokered deposits at the end of the year amounted to 18 percent of its total deposits. One of Ally's risks is that rising interest rates could make those harder to get, the company said in its Securities and Exchange Commission filing on Thursday.

The Treasury plans to sell 95 million shares for \$25 to \$28

each, the filing said. That would raise \$2.38 billion to \$2.66 billion.

Treasury also granted the offering's underwriters — Citigroup, Goldman, Sachs & Co., Morgan Stanley and Barclays — a 30-day option to buy up to an additional 14.3 million shares to cover possible additional demand. That would raise up to \$399 million more, boosting the overall proceeds as high as \$3.06 billion. None of that money goes to Ally. □

US economic growth for 4Q is revised higher



A dish is prepped at the Fig & Olive restaurant, near New York's Rockefeller Center, in New York. The Commerce Department released fourth-quarter gross domestic product on Thursday, March 27, 2014.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

MARTIN CRUTSINGER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy grew at a 2.6 percent annual rate in the October-December quar-

ter, slightly more than previously estimated, as consumer spending rose at the fastest pace in three years. The fourth-quarter growth rate was a bit stronger

than the 2.4 percent estimate made last month, the Commerce Department reported Thursday. The revision reflected stronger consumer spending, which

rose at an annual rate of 3.3 percent — its best quarterly pace since 2010.

Even with the upward revision, growth in the overall economy slowed from a 4.1 percent pace in the July-September quarter. Analysts think growth has slowed even more in the current January-March period to around a 2 percent annual rate. A harsh winter has disrupted factory production and kept people away from shopping malls. But once warmer weather appears, analysts are looking for a rebound in economic activity with consumer spending expected to be helped by pent-up demand from purchases that were deferred during the bad weather.

Analysts viewed the upward revision to fourth quarter growth as an encouraging sign showing that the economy had more momentum going into the first quarter than previously believed.

Sal Guatieri, senior econo-

mist at BMO Capital Markets, forecast that first quarter growth would slow to around 1.7 percent because of the winter disruptions but he said growth will likely rebound to around 3 percent in the April-June period.

Many economists are forecasting that growth for the entire year will hit 3 percent. If that forecast proves accurate, it would make growth this year the strongest since 2005, two years before the nation plunged into the worst recession since the 1930s.

Since the recession ended in June 2009, the economy has struggled to gain momentum and the weak growth has made it harder for people who lost jobs during the downturn to find work.

The report Thursday on overall economic growth as measured by the gross domestic product was the government's third and final look at the fourth quarter GDP. □

Cape Wind gets \$400 million more from investors

ERIN AILWORTH

© 2013 The Boston Globe

Cape Wind said this week several financial companies have committed to providing \$400 million to help finance the offshore wind project slated to be built in Nantucket Sound. That means Cape Wind has raised \$1.3 billion, roughly half of the project's estimated \$2.5 billion cost. The latest chunk comes

from Natixis, a French investment management company; Dutch bank Rabobank; and The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UJF Ltd. The three firms are the lead arrangers for Cape Wind, meaning they will provide financing for some of the debt and bring in other investors to finance the rest. "This is one of the key steps in completing the financing package for the construc-

tion of the Cape Wind Project," said Ted Roosevelt IV, managing director at Barclays, the wind farm's financial adviser.

Cape Wind has revealed several financing and construction deals in the last few months. It signed contracts with two companies earlier this month for the cables needed to transport power generated by the 130-turbine wind farm. And

in late February the company said it had secured a \$600 million loan from the Danish Export Credit Agency, EKF.

In December, Cape Wind completed a deal to purchase turbines for the project from a Siemens subsidiary.

"We are pleased that these experienced offshore wind lenders are supporting our efforts to diversify

our region's energy mix and helping to launch the US offshore wind industry," Jim Gordon, president of Cape Wind, said in a statement.

The project's large price tag could be offset by a federal tax credit, for which Cape Wind expects to qualify. The credit would cover 30 percent of Cape Wind's capital costs. □

Mutts



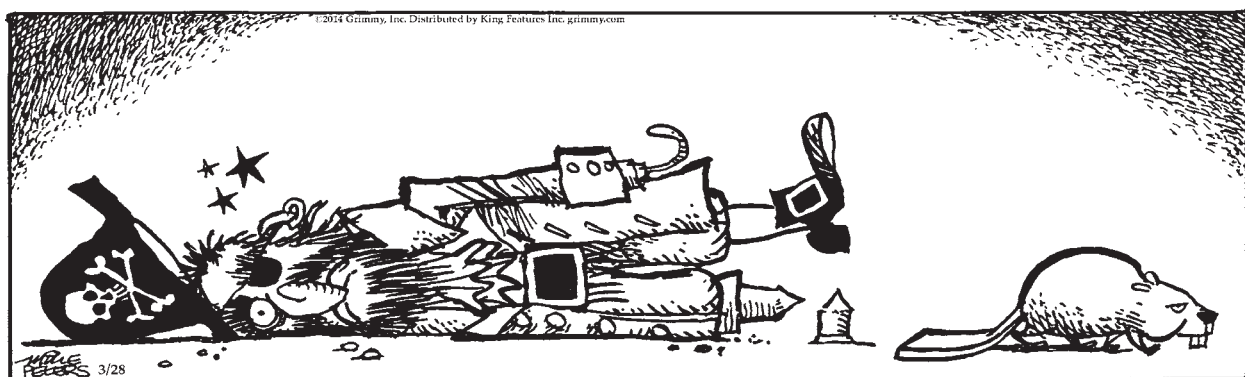
6 Chix



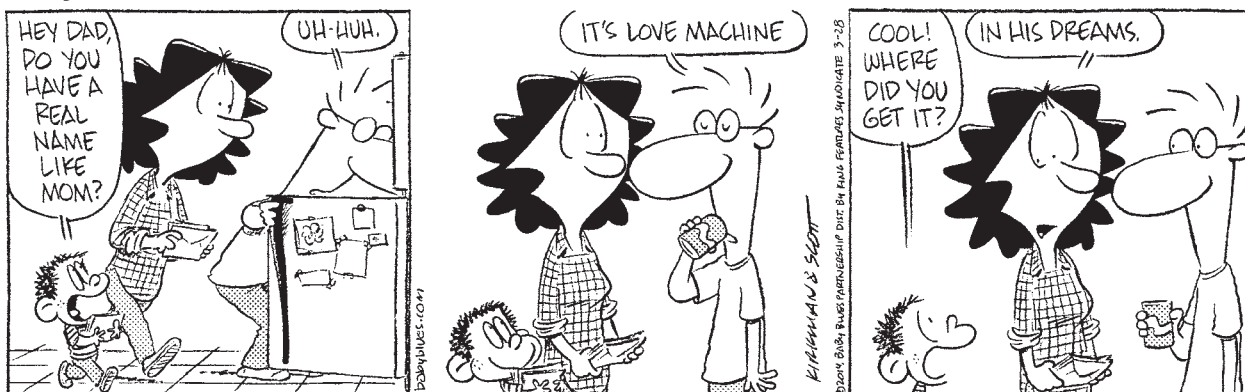
Blondie



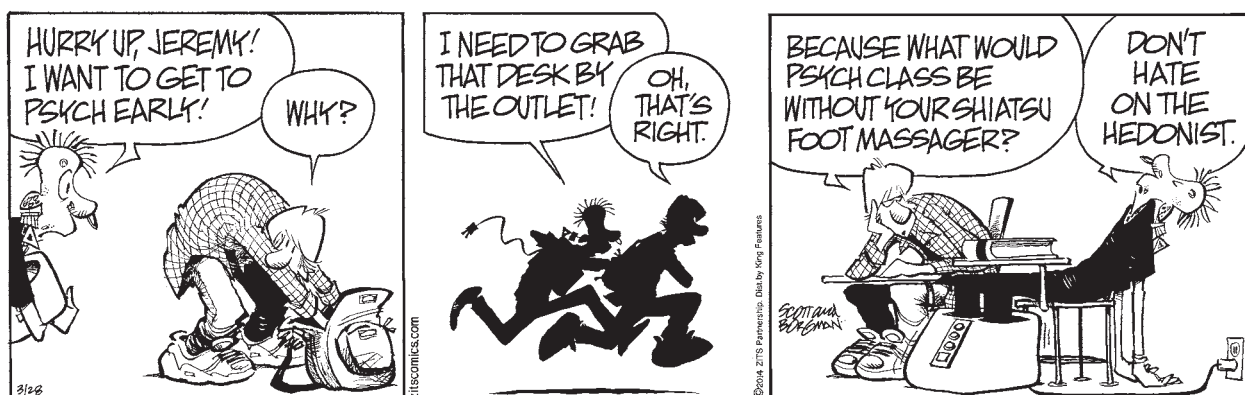
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

			2		5			
				6				
	3	2				4	1	
7			4		6			5
	5						9	
2			7		1			4
	1	8				2	3	
				2				
			1		7			

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

3/28

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

6	3	9	1	8	4	5	7	2
1	4	2	5	9	7	3	8	6
8	7	5	6	2	3	1	4	9
5	1	3	4	6	2	8	9	7
2	8	7	3	1	9	4	6	5
4	9	6	7	5	8	2	1	3
9	5	4	8	3	6	7	2	1
7	6	1	2	4	5	9	3	8
3	2	8	9	7	1	6	5	4

ACROSS

- 1 "Go get it, Fido!"
- 6 Grand ____; bridge coup
- 10 Word of disgust
- 14 Banishment
- 15 Neighbor of Bolivia
- 16 Canyon sound
- 17 Large northern sea duck
- 18 Intentions
- 19 Swimming spot
- 20 Mississippi River boats
- 22 Not fine; full of gritty particles
- 24 Weathercock
- 25 Gullies
- 26 Still stiff as a board
- 29 External
- 30 Body of water
- 31 ____ on; convinces about
- 33 Whiplash sites
- 37 Late Chief Justice Warren
- 39 More impolite
- 41 Carvey or Plato
- 42 Iron alloy
- 44 Adjust a clock
- 46 Use needle and thread
- 47 Refueling ship
- 49 Insteps
- 51 Kings' palaces
- 54 Threesome
- 55 Continuously
- 56 Naughtiness
- 60 Coffin platform
- 61 Catch with a hook
- 63 Nairobi's nation
- 64 Frosted
- 65 Every
- 66 Basic metric unit of volume
- 67 Takes home, after expenses
- 68 Putin's "No!"
- 69 Wear away

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
20					21			22	23			
			24				25					
26	27	28				29						
30			31		32			33	34	35	36	
37			38		39			40	41			
42			43		44			45	46			
			47		48			49	50			
51	52	53				54						
55						56				57	58	59
60					61	62			63			
64					65				66			
67					68				69			

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

3/28/14

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

JILT	UPSET	ROMA
ODOR	PLANE	EVEN
SLAY	DUNDERHEAD	
HEN	TAME	EARN
SKATE	ASS	
AWHILE	DITHER	
CHALK	GRAMS	MUM
MORN	JEANS	PAPA
ELK	LOONS	FINER
ESTEEM	MINCES	
HAL	QUASI	
EBSEN	HURT	PIE
CLASSIFIED	WARS	
HOLE	VALUE	ATOP
OWES	ENTER	DENY

(c) 2014 Tribune Content Agency, LLC
All Rights Reserved.

3/28/14

- 3 Movement of the waves
- 4 Hold on; adhere
- 5 ____ Hermits; pop band since the 1960s
- 6 Extra
- 7 Flowery rings
- 8 Ulna's place
- 9 Oman's capital
- 10 Fixed
- 11 Oak tree nut
- 12 "____ Were the Days"
- 13 Shoe bottoms
- 21 Go into
- 23 Kill
- 25 Tricks
- 26 Does drugs
- 27 ____ as a pin
- 28 Unclothed
- 29 Created at an earlier date
- 32 Draws; attracts
- 34 Money
- 35 Leg joint
- 36 Cutting tools
- 38 Gym wear
- 40 Fannies
- 43 Easter flower
- 45 Drip slowly
- 48 Subside
- 50 One who shares a will
- 51 Home of logs
- 52 Wonderland visitor
- 53 Sugary
- 54 Too ____; not loose enough
- 56 Riot control spray
- 57 5 ____ 10 is 2
- 58 Watched
- 59 Taxi rider's fee
- 62 Negative vote

Obama: Over 6M signed up for health care

RICARDO ZALDIVAR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Back on track after a stumbling start, President Barack Obama's health care overhaul reached a milestone Thursday, with more than 6 million Americans signed up for coverage through new insurance markets. The announcement — four days before open enrollment season ends Monday — fulfills a revised goal set by the Congressional Budget Office and embraced by the White House, which has been working vigorously to implement Obama's most significant first term achievement.

Achieving the 6 million level was a relief to congressional Democrats, who passed the measure. The law remains unpopular with the American public, and Republicans are making its repeal their rallying cry in the upcoming November elections.

Like much else about Obama's health care law, the 6 million level comes with a caveat: The administration has yet to announce how many consumers actually closed the deal by paying their first month's premium. Some independent estimates are that as many as 10 percent to 20 percent have not paid, which would bring the total enrollment to between 5 million and 6 million people.

The White House said the president made the announcement during an international conference call with enrollment counselors and volunteers, while traveling in Italy. Administration officials, focused on signing up even more people over the weekend, played down the occasion. Others said it was unmistakably a promising sign.

"I think the program is finally starting to hit its stride in terms of reaching the enrollment goals the administration set," said John Rother, chief executive of the National Coalition on Health Care, a nonpartisan coalition of businesses, health care industry groups and consumer organiza-



A screenshot from the website for HealthCare.gov, photographed in Washington. President Barack Obama says more than 6 million Americans have signed up for coverage through the new health insurance markets created by his overhaul. That's a milestone, fulfilling a goal set by Congressional Budget Office and embraced by the White House. The president made the announcement during an international conference call with enrollment counselors and volunteers, while traveling in Italy. Monday is the deadline to enroll in the new insurance exchanges, although many people will still be able to take advantage of extensions announced this week.

(AP Photo/Jon Elswick, File

tions.

"It still has a ways to go in terms of achieving public acceptance."

To put the 6 million sign-ups in perspective, consider that the HealthCare.gov website didn't work when it was launched in October. Millions of people trying

to access online marketplace exchanges that offer subsidized private insurance were met with frozen screens. Nonetheless, the administration's achievement is still short of the original target of covering 7 million people through the exchanges.

Tel: 582-0697 / 583-7484
Schotland str. 70
Email: quality@setarnet.aw
Website: www.arubaqualityapartments.com

Extend your Stay at
Quality Apartments

- *Studio & Loft Apts.
- *Fully Furnished
- *Kitchen / Airco / Cable TV
- *Swimming Pool

Less than 1 mile from Eagle Beach & 4 large supermarkets.
Feel free to contact or visit us.
Mon - Fri: 8am-7pm. Sat & Sun: 9am-5pm.

TODAY BONDIA

How to reach us!

Downtown

Classifieds

FOR SALE

weeks 9+10 Tropicana

renovated, beautiful 3 bedroom suite with ocean view, priced for quick sale \$19,000 or best offer for both weeks. Call 582-7000 x 1507 until March 25th or 978-928-4440 after that. redsoxdonna@tiac.net

201570

FOR SALE

La Cabana

Week 13, Sun-Sun, fixed week Studio, sleeps 4 Newly renovated, ocean and pool view \$5,000 Denise: 847-446-4223 denisehgibson@gmail.com

201575

TIME SHARE FOR SALE

1 br Divi Links

1 br , sleeps 4, Blding E floating week May to Dec, \$1500 for quick sale. Local 583-800 ext. 2022 until April 4th then ext 2010 e-mail: bernieandsally@comcast.net

201595

FOR RENT 2014

Week 13 unit 2011 Costa Linda Ocean view, 2 bedroom / 2 bathroom \$1200 chick-in 3-28 - 14 - 4 - 14 2014 Phone: 583-8000 rm 3004 email: xxsharp@aol.com

201593

FOR RENT

2 nights Aruba Beach Club 3/27-3/28 for \$150.00 B.O Phone 565-9394 E-mail: rmwjmwa@aol.com

201596

FOR SALE

Apartment building on 990m2 property land along the highway leading from Oranjestad to Noord. In view of the location, with some adjustments, also suitable for other commercial purposes. Call 593-7118

Antiqueshop
ROCO PLAZA
Tanki Leendert rd. 4A
Daily Open: 9 am- 5pm
Saturday half day 9 - 1
For Info: celph. 741-5640
SALE on labled item
FLEAMARKET April 6

DOCTOR ON DUTY



Oranjestad
Dr. Alvarez

EMERGENCIA 911



POLIS	100
POLIS	581-1100
ORANJESTAD	582-4000
NOORD	587-0009
STA. CRUZ	585-4710
SAVANETA	584-7000
SAN NICOLAS	584-5000
FIRE DEPT.	115
FIRE DEPT.	582-1108
POLIS TIPLINE	11141
HOSPITAL	527-4000
AMBULANCE	582-1234
SAN NICOLAS	
AMBULANCE	584-5050

PHARMACY

O'STAD: Serv. Noord Tel: 586-4606
S. NICOLAS: Seroe Preto Tel: 584-4833

INFORMATION	118
SETAR	582-2116
TAXI	582-5900
TAXI-TAS	587-5900
PROF. TAXI	588-0035
TAXI D.T.S.	587-2300
SERVICE ARUBA	583-3232

CRUISESHIP

Mar. 28
Delphin

Aruba Aiport	524-2424
American Airline	582-2700
Avianca	588-0059
Dutch Antilles	588-1900
Insel Air	588-9314
Jet Blue	588-2244
Spirit Airlines	582-7117
Tiara Air	588-4272
Venezolana	583-7674

FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP CLINIC

Tel: 584-6440
Alcoholism & Drug Addiction,
Anonymity guaranteed

FUNDACION

Anti-Droga
Aruba

(FADA) Tel: 583-2999

FUNDACION

Respetami

Tel: 582-4433

Diabetic Foundation

Arubano

Tel: 583-3808

Narcotics Anonymous

Tel: 583-8989

Foundation Amor

pa Prohimo

Tel: 583-3345 /586-6976

Women in Difficulties

Foundation

Tel: 583-5400

Bloodbank Aruba

Tel: 587-0002

Big threat to Japan whaling: Declining appetites

MARI YAMAGUCHI

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The greatest threat to Japan's whaling industry may not be the environmentalists harassing its ships or the countries demanding its abolishment, but Japanese consumers. They've lost their appetite. The amount of whale meat stockpiled for lack of buyers has nearly doubled over 10 years, even as anti-whaling protests helped drive catches to record lows. More than 2,300 minke whales worth of meat is sitting in freezers while whalers still plan to catch another 1,300 whales per year.

Low demand adds to the uncertainty that looms ahead of an International Court of Justice ruling expected Monday on Japan's whaling in the Antarctic Ocean. The whaling is ostensibly for research, but Australia argued in a lawsuit that it's a cover for commercial hunts.

The stated goal of the research, which began in 1987, is to show that commercial whaling is environmentally sustainable, but a growing question is whether it is economically sustainable. Japan's government-subsidized whaling program is sinking deeper into debt and faces an imminent, costly renovation of its 27-year-old mother ship, Nisshin Maru.

"A resumption of commer-



In this Feb. 8, 2009 file photo released by Japan's Institute of Cetacean Research workers measure a captured minke whale on the deck of Japanese whaling ship, the Nisshin Maru, as Sea Shepherd's ship, the M/Y Steve Irwin, partly seen at left top, follows from behind in the Ross Sea, off Antarctica.

Associated Press

cial whaling is not a realistic option anymore, and the goal has become a mere excuse to continue research hunts," said Ayako Okubo, marine science researcher at Tokai University. "The program is used for the vested interests."

The research program began a year after an international ban on commercial hunting took effect. Japan is one of a few countries, including Norway and Iceland, which continue to hunt whales despite the



A shopper walks past a whale meat specialty store at Tokyo's Ameyoko shopping district, Thursday, March 27, 2014.

Associated Press

moratorium. Activists from the group Sea Shepherd try to block the whalers by dragging ropes in the water to damage their propellers, and by lobbing smoke bombs at the ships, and through other methods. Whale meat not used for

study is sold as food in Japan. But according to Fisheries Agency statistics, the amount of whale meat stockpiled in freezers at major Japanese ports totaled about 4,600 tons at the end of 2012, from less than 2,500 tons in 2002.

A Fisheries Agency official conceded that Sea Shepherd's efforts to harass whaling ships have kept the stockpile from growing even bigger.

Whale meat supplied half of Japan's protein needs 50 years ago, but today it's limited to specialty restaurants and school lunches in most of the country. It is a bigger part of the local diet in several coastal whaling towns that are allowed to conduct small-scale coastal whaling outside of International Whaling Commission oversight.

Distributors have said whale meat is unpopular largely because of the high price, lack of recipe varieties and negative image.

Once a cheaper substitute for beef, it's now about the same price. Whale bacon is sold as a delicacy, priced about 2,000 yen per 100 grams (\$90 per pound), several times the cost of regular bacon.

The Institute of Cetacean Research, a nonprofit entity overseen by the government that runs the program, made 2 billion yen (\$20 million) from the whale meat sales last year, down from more than 7 billion yen (\$70 million) in 2004, according to a financial report viewed by The Associated Press.

The institute rejected repeated requests by the AP for comment on whaling and its future, citing concerns about possible repercussions and violence by the Sea Shepherd on the Japanese whalers. The five-ship fleet is expected to return home within weeks, though the institute would not give any details. Its website is filled with press releases related to Sea Shepherd instead of its research.

Initially, the government injected about 500 million yen (\$5 million) a year into the program, or about 10 percent of its costs.

By 2007, the subsidy had grown to about 900 million yen (\$9 million), and is projected to exceed 5 billion yen (\$50 million) for the current fiscal year ending in September. □

La Vida Loca
Call Now
741-8861
Where dreams come true
 Massage & Escort services
BEAUTIFUL
LATIN
WOMEN
for adults
 Sweet and Sensual
 Service 24/7

Call 565-9535

Honey Dolls
 Massage and escort service
Beautiful Latin Girls
Pick-up & Delivery 24/7
 Serving Men-Couples- Women
 All Genders
Red Light Tour
Bachelor Party Specialised
 The best in the Caribbean



This April 8, 2013 file photo shows bassist John McVie performing during a Fleetwood Mac concert at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Associated Press

Fleetwood Mac to launch tour with both McVies

NEW YORK (AP) — The McVies are going back on the road with Fleetwood Mac.

The band announced a 33-city North American tour Thursday. It's the first set of shows since they canceled performances last year as bassist John McVie was being treated for cancer.

The tour also marks Christine McVie officially rejoining the band since 1998's "The Dance" tour.

The "On With the Show" tour will kick off Sept. 30 in Minneapolis and wrap up Dec. 20 in Tampa, Fla. Tickets go on sale April 7.

The band also includes Mick Fleetwood, Stevie Nicks and Lindsay Buckingham.

Fleetwood Mac canceled 14 shows in Australia and New Zealand during John McVie's treatment. The band spokeswoman didn't specify the type of cancer.

Christine McVie joined Fleetwood Mac for a show in London last year. □

"Gone With the Wind" prequel to focus on Mammy

NEW YORK (AP) — Decades after the publication of "Gone With the Wind," Mammy is finally getting a back story.

Simon & Schuster imprint Atria announced Thursday that it will publish Donald McCaig's "Ruth's Journey" in October. A prequel to Margaret Mitchell's million-selling 1936 novel, the book was authorized by Mitchell's estate. McCaig previously wrote an authorized spinoff focused on Rhett Butler, "Rhett's People."

"Ruth's Journey" will track Scarlett O'Hara's no-nonsense servant's life from her arrival in Georgia in the early 19th century. In 1939, Mammy was immortalized on film by Hattie McDaniel, who became the first black performer to win an Academy Award. Mitchell's novel was often criticized for romanticizing antebellum life and for its one-dimensional portraits of blacks. □

Russell Crowe calls 'Noah' criticism 'irrational'



From left, Russell Crowe, Jennifer Connelly and director Darren Aronofsky arrive at NY Premiere of "Noah" on Wednesday, March 26, 2014, in New York.

Associated Press

GINA ABDY
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Russell Crowe calls the criticism that the film "Noah" has received "irrational" and says he's happy audiences can finally see it for themselves. Crowe spoke to The Associated Press on Wednesday night at the New York premiere of the biblical epic, directed by Darren Aronofsky and featuring Emma Watson and Jennifer Connelly, who were also at the event.

"Noah" has been the subject of controversy with some religious groups claiming the story has been inaccurately portrayed. That has prompted Paramount Pictures to add a disclaimer to its marketing material saying "artistic license has been taken" in telling the story. The film has also been banned in many Islamic countries where it's taboo to depict a prophet. "We have endured 12 to 14 months of irrational criticism and now people are start-

ing to see it and to realize how respectful it is, and how true to the source material it is and how intense of an experience it is in the movie theater, you know, so that's cool," he said.

Emma Watson, who plays Ila, the wife of Noah's son Shem, says she wasn't surprised by the response to the film.

"To be honest, I expected there to be controversy, I think all Biblical adaptations carry the weight of that because it is something that is so personal to people," she said. "Everyone interprets it differently, but so far, the response has been really positive, and I think the film, when people see it, (they) will realize that it is very sensitive and inclusive ... I'm really proud of the movie."

Crowe said his decision to play the title role was in part swayed by the desire to work with Aronofsky.

"(It was) kind of a long-standing desire to work with Darren, and having

watched him develop as a filmmaker, having sat around and getting close, but never actually working together," he said.

He added: "When he first came to talk to me about it, he brought a 40-page booklet of renderings of all the various sequences, sort of how he wanted the movie to look. And it was a combination of what he was going for and what was actually on the page that I felt would have a connection to people and that would resonate for me."

Aronofsky said it was exciting to take on "Noah" because "no one has done the Noah story on film and for me that was very strange. It is one of the oldest stories ever told, it is one of our greatest stories, and it should be on the silver screen, so it very exciting to bring something of this kind of scope and epic to the big screen."

"Noah" opens in U.S. theaters on Friday. □

No lazy Rivers: 'Joan & Melissa' return to action

FRAZIER MOORE

AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Joan Rivers, who for more than a half-century has turned her life inside out for comedy, is starting her fourth season doing just that for the reality show she shares with her daughter, Melissa.

"Joan & Melissa: Joan Knows Best?" (10 p.m. EDT Saturday on WEtv) finds Joan making a sex tape. Attending a lacrosse game where Melissa picks a fight with her teenage son's coach. Consoling Melissa after her boyfriend is caught in a compromising position.

She also mourns the death of her beloved dog, Max, then stages a splendiferous funeral that includes a chorus, an avant-garde poet and a male ballerina in a tutu.

"The vet said Max could have been anywhere from 11 to 14 years old," says Joan solemnly, then eases into a wisecrack: "You can usually check a dog's teeth, but Max lived for a while in California, so they were capped."

She and Melissa have invited a reporter to hear about their show's new season,



This April 22, 2013 file photo shows TV personalities Joan Rivers, left, and daughter Melissa Rivers at the 2013 Matrix New York Women in Communications Awards in New York.

Associated Press

which tracks this mother-daughter duo in their professional pursuits (including production of their weekly E! series, "Fashion Police," and her online talk show, "In Bed With Joan") as well as shining a glaring light into their personal lives.

"It's no-holds-barred," says Joan proudly.

Item: On one episode, Riv-

ers, at 80 years old, goes to heroic lengths to undo her history as a fashionista and a frequent flier to her plastic surgeon's office. She wants to look more age-appropriate to land an acting role as a senior on a proposed TV drama series, and prepares herself, stripped of any vanity, with what she calls — no, not a

makeover — but instead "a make-UNDER."

For this recent interview, though, she is every bit the Joan the world knows and loves: nipped, tucked and coiffed to a T. You ask who is she wearing? A shocking pink Armani jacket, Chanel slacks, Manolos, a necklace from her own Joan Rivers collection "and a Hermes knockoff that I got in China. Come as close as you want, mister," she boasts as she holds up the baby-soft handbag, "you're not gonna tell the difference!"

"Joan & Melissa" came about when Joan, who lives on the Upper East Side, began routinely crashing with her daughter, an Angeleno, to tape the L.A.-based "Fashion Police."

"She'd be in my house two or three days a week," Melissa recalls. "Then, during one of our many moments of chaos, someone said, 'This is truly like a reality show.' And the next thing you know, it's an ACTUAL reality show."

Melissa, clad hopefully spring-ish on this frigid day in a turtleneck and brightly patterned Alexander McQueen skirt, first partnered on-air with Joan 20 years ago to cover red carpet awards events for E! Live fashion coverage was

new to TV, and mother and daughter were slammed for indulging in such shallowness.

Joan shrugs. "What are the stars wearing? Are they drunk, are they high? And do they look like they're still happy together? That's what your friends are talking about! Luckily, we were both very shallow, so that's what we talked about, too. And still do, as reflected in both 'Joan & Melissa' and 'Fashion Police.'"

"We promote shallowness across all platforms," says Melissa with a laugh.

But living life, however shallow, on a reality show can get deeply complicated for those it exposes.

"You come down in the morning and bump into crew members on the stairs," Joan says.

"They come into my room while I'm asleep to pre-light," says Melissa. "I pull the covers over my head."

"It's going to be easier next year," Joan predicts.

"We're gonna use drones." This year, there was one development the probing cameras didn't catch: Joan got a tattoo.

A couple of seasons ago, viewers saw her visit a tattoo parlor with a chum, then, in her words, "chicken out" before her chosen bumblebee design found its way to her derriere.

Three weeks ago, with her same friend in tow, she got inked.

"Margie and I walk into this Village tattoo parlor, two old blond Jewish women," she laughs as she slides up her left sleeve. In simple characters each barely a half-inch tall, "6M" is tattooed on the inside of her arm.

"It stands for the 6 million Jews that were killed in Auschwitz," she says. "I didn't put this in the show, because it's a serious thing. I didn't tell anybody until it was over: 'Guess what I did this afternoon?'"

Since the subject has been raised, Melissa now has an announcement: She's considering a tattoo on her wrist. Joan isn't pleased: It might be too big and too visible. □

L'Wren Scott leaves estate to Mick Jagger

NEW YORK (AP) — L'Wren Scott has left her entire estate to longtime boyfriend and Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger.

The Daily News says papers filed in Manhattan's Surrogate's Court on Wednesday estimated the value of the 49-year-old designer's personal estate at \$9 million.

The filing said Scott's main asset was her Manhattan condo worth approximately \$8 million. Other items included her jewelry, clothing, household furnishings and personal automobiles. A small and private funeral service was held for Scott in Los Angeles on Tuesday. Scott committed suicide on March 17 in New York. □



This Feb. 16, 2012, file photo, shows singer Mick Jagger, right, with designer L'Wren Scott after her Fall 2012 collection was modeled during Fashion Week, in New York.

Associated Press

The Republic of Fear



DAVID BROOKS

© 2014 New York Times

If you're reading this, you are probably not buffeted by daily waves of physical terror. You may fear job loss or emotional loss, but you probably don't fear that somebody is going to slash your throat or that a gang will invade your house come dinner-time, carrying away your kin and property. We take a basic level of order for granted.

But billions of people live in a different emotional landscape, enveloped by hidden terror. Many of these people live in the developing world.

When we send young people out to help these regions, we tell them they are there to tackle "poverty," using the sort of economic designation we're comfortable with. We usually assume that scarcity is the big challenge to be faced. We send them to dig wells or bring bed nets or distribute food or money, and, of course, that's wonderful work.

But as Gary A. Haugen and Victor Boutros point out in their gripping and perspective-altering book, "The Locust Effect," these places are not just grappling with poverty. They are marked by disorder, violence and man-inflicted suffering.

"The relentless threat of violence is part of the core subtext of their lives, but we are unlikely to see it, and they are unlikely to tell us about it. We would be wise, however, to not be fooled - because, like grief, the thing we cannot see may be the deepest part of their day."

People in many parts of the world simply live beyond the apparatus of law and order. The District of Columbia spends about \$850 per person per year on police. In Bangladesh, the government spends less than \$1.50 per person per year on police. The cops are just not there.

In the United States, there is one prosecutor for every 12,000 citizens. In Malawi, there is one prosecutor for every 1.5 million citizens. The prosecutors are just not there.

Even when there is some legal system in place, it's not designed to impose law and order for the people. It is there to protect the regime from the people. The well-connected want a legal system that can be bought and sold.

Haugen and Boutros tell the story of an 8-year-old Peruvian

girl named Yuri whose body was found in the street one morning, her skull crushed in, her legs wrapped in cables and her underwear at her ankles. The evidence pointed to a member of one of the richer families in the town, so the police and prosecutors destroyed the evidence. Her clothing went missing. A sperm sample that could have identified the perpetrator was thrown out. A bloody mattress was sliced down by a third, so that the blood stained spot could be discarded.

Yuri's family wanted to find the killer, but they couldn't afford to pay the prosecutor, so nothing was done. The family sold all their livestock to hire lawyers, who took the money but abandoned the case. These sorts of events are utterly typical - the products of legal systems that range from the arbitrary to the Kafkaesque. We in the affluent world live on one side of a great global threshold. Our fundamental security was established by our ancestors. We tend to assume that the primary problems of politics are economic and that the injustices of the world can be addressed with economic levers. When empires like the Soviet Union collapse, we send in economists with privatization plans instead of cops to help create rule of law. When thuggish autocracies invade their neighbors we impose economic sanctions.

But people without our inherited institutions live on the other side of the threshold and have a different reality. They live within a contagion of chaos. They live where the primary realities include violence, theft and radical uncertainty. Their world is governed less by long-term economic incentives and more by raw fear. In a world without functioning institutions, predatory behavior and the passions of domination and submission blot out economic logic.

The primary problem of politics is not creating growth. It's creating order. Until that is largely achieved, life can be nasty, brutish and short.

Haugen is president of a human rights organization called the International Justice Mission, which tries to help people around the world build the institutions of law. One virtue of his group is that it stares evil in the eyes and helps local people confront the large and petty thugs who inflict such predatory cruelty on those around them. Not every aid organization is equipped to do this, to confront elemental human behavior when it exists unrestrained by effective law. It's easier to avoid this reality, to have come-together moments in daytime.

Police training might be less uplifting than some of the other stories that attract donor dollars. But, in every society, order has to be wrung out of exploitation. Unless cruelty is tamed, poverty will persist. □



The Season of the Twitch



GAIL COLLINS

© 2014 New York Times

Some of you appear to be very, very worried about which party is going to win control of the Senate in November. Really, you should stop for a while. Take a break. No fretting about undecided voters until there's at least a minimal chance that the undecided voters know who's running.

Right now, we're in the season where center stage goes to whoever screws up the most. Relax and enjoy.

For instance, Scott Brown, who's pursuing the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate in New Hampshire, just had an interview with The Associated Press in which he addressed the fact that he has not actually lived in the state since he was 1 1/2 years old.

"Do I have the best credentials? Probably not, 'cause, you know, whatever," he said.

Brown went on to point out his "strong ties" to New Hampshire, which included a recent move back into his longtime vacation house in the state, and that residency from birth to 18 months, which we all know is one of the most developmentally important periods in a person's life.

You do have to love the "you know, whatever" part. This is a guy who once got elected senator from Massachusetts on

the basis of his easygoing, truck-driving persona. We will now stop to contemplate whether it is possible to take that act too far.

Brown is hardly the only walking gaffe on the campaign trail. Thanks to Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, candidates all over the country have been reminded to make sure that if their feel-good videos include footage of a victorious college basketball team, said team is actually from the home state and not, um, Hated Rival Duke. Then there's the Improbable Leap to Glory. In Iowa, there are five people running for the Republican Senate nomination, and early polls have shown that voters have no earthly idea who any of them are. Then state Sen. Joni Ernst unveiled a TV ad in which she announced: "I grew up castrating hogs on an Iowa farm."

The actual theme of the piece was that Ernst planned to go to Washington and cut pork. But it was obviously the castration angle that got noticed. She looked so happy when she said it. The woman was positively glowing. Unlike the famous Sarah Palin interview in front of a turkey-beheading machine, Ernst's ad featured pigs that were alive, although perhaps looking a little depressed.

The ad went viral, which is, of course, every candidate's dream.

Going viral doesn't always work. (We are thinking of the guy who attempted to defeat Rep. Nancy Pelosi by depicting her as a zombie priestess.) But it will usually get you farther than you might have gone without it. And if Ernst winds up winning the primary, we will probably spend the entire fall listening to candidates claim they helped neuter feral cats for the SPCA.

Until this week, the strong favorite to win the Iowa Senate race was Rep. Bruce Braley, a Democrat. However, Braley locked up the March award for Stupidest Sentient Candidate by warning a bunch of trial lawyers at a Tex-

as fundraiser that if they didn't contribute to his campaign, Republicans might take control of the Senate and there would be "a farmer from Iowa who never went to law school" running the Judiciary Committee.

That farmer would be Charles Grassley, who has been representing Iowa in the Senate since 1981. Someone taped Braley at an off-the-record meeting with a special interest group and Republican operatives posted it on the Web! Who ever heard of such a thing happening? No way he could have seen that one coming. The congressman apologized in a statement that stressed his love of agriculture, his youth spent "working a grain elevator" and his confidence that he had the support of "hundreds of farmers across Iowa." This, too, was somewhat alarming since Iowa has nearly 90,000 farms.

On the plus side, he didn't say "whatever."

But New Hampshire's still my favorite. Scott Brown isn't the only Republican sniffing around the Senate seat, which is held by Democrat Jeanne Shaheen. There's also Bob Smith, a former New Hampshire senator who was tossed out of office in a 2002 primary and moved to Florida, where he ran for elective office twice with a spectacular degree of failure. But he kept - yes! - a vacation home in New Hampshire.

Carpetbagger issues are generally meaningless. Hillary Clinton worked out fine for New York even though she was so short on connections that she once transformed a childhood car ride from Chicago to Scranton into a visit to Elmira. But you can understand why actual New Hampshire residents might start feeling a little sensitive at this point.

Or perhaps, there's room for one more. You know who else has a vacation home in New Hampshire? Mitt Romney! He's tanned. He's rested. He's ready. He knows about hidden tape recorders.

And it's still early. □



From MLB Field to Video Room: How the New Instant Replay Review Will Work

Employees demonstrate the replay operations center, which links to camera feeds from all 30 ballparks, at MLB Advanced Media headquarters in New York, March 26, 2014. The new replay system is greatly expanded from the one that has reviewed only home run calls since 2008, though MLB officials expect force plays and tag plays to be the subject of most managers' challenges.

(Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times)

RICHARD SANDOMIR
© 2014 New York Times

NEW YORK - The heart of Major League Baseball's new instant replay review system is a low-lit operations center, decorated in muted grays, at the Chelsea Markets headquarters of MLB Advanced Media. At each workstation, an array of colorful video monitors will show a dozen or so camera angles from each major league stadium. Umpires - in this room they are dubbed video officials - will rotate off the road and work beside video technicians to determine if there is conclusive evidence to confirm or overturn a call. In a demonstration Wednesday, two MLB officials played the roles of an umpire in Manhattan and an umpire calling from an Arizona Fall League to report a manager's challenge to a play. "I have a challenge from the Scottsdale Scorpions that the runner at first base was safe," said Chris Mari-

nak, senior vice president for league economics and strategy.

Justin Klemm, the director of replay, was at a workstation, playing the umpire/video official. Marinak played the Arizona umpire. Klemm examined the play from cameras stationed on the first- and third-base lines. He studied each angle a few times. "Do you have another angle?" he asked the technician sitting to his left. "High-home?" Eventually he was satisfied that he could not be sure if the first baseman slapped a tag on the runner's knee as he stumbled away from the bag.

So he told Marinak, who was standing about 15 feet behind him: "That call will stand. We don't have conclusive evidence."

The system is a greatly expanded version of one that has reviewed only home run calls since August 2008. Umpires made their decisions by looking at replays on TV monitors at each sta-

dium.

The new system links camera feeds from the 30 ballparks to the operations center. MLB has also installed its own stationary high home plate cameras at each stadium to offer its video officials the best possible view of base runners who might have to be repositioned depending on their decisions.

A manager must leave the dugout and tell the umpire he is challenging a call. He cannot yell his request from the dugout. He cannot throw a flag. He can also argue a play but must answer if an umpire asks, "Are you making a challenge or not, buddy?"

Each manager gets one challenge a game, but if he is correct, he gets another. He must specify to the umpire exactly what he is challenging and can ask that more than one element of a play be reviewed.

There are long lists of what can or cannot be chal-

lenged. Force plays, tag plays, ground-rule doubles, hit by pitches and fan interference are on the roster of challengeable situations. But balks, foul tips, balls and strikes, and the neighborhood play at second base during a double-play attempt are on an even lengthier list of plays that cannot be challenged.

During the testing of the system in spring training - which involved broadcast trucks outside each ballpark, not the Manhattan operations center - 61 plays had been reviewed and 11 had been overturned, through Tuesday. Forty-nine of the reviews came from managers' challenges; the other 12 were initiated by the umpires' crew chief (which can only happen from the seventh inning on).

Baseball officials expect that force plays and tag plays will be the largest segment of challenges.

Joe Torre, the former New York Yankees manager

who is now MLB's executive vice president for baseball operations, said the system was intended to preserve the "instinctive" desire of managers to dispute a call while providing a remedy to reverse incorrect calls that in the past could not be.

"There may be a bang-bang play where the manager will argue, and defend his player, but it doesn't mean he'll challenge," he said.

The dialogue can continue even when managers have no challenges left; they can ask an umpire to review a play. The umpire has the discretion to agree. The system is starting at a time when there are fewer blustery, base-kicking, dirt-tossing managers around. How would Lou Piniella, Earl Weaver or Ozzie Guillen cope with video review?

"They'd get fired up because they didn't have this kind of tool," Marinak said. "Now managers have less incentive to go crazy." □